



# Persuading Others

## About this Topic: Persuading Others



### Topic Mentor

#### Harry Mills

Harry Mills is the author of 22 books on sales, negotiation, and influence, including the best-selling titles *Artful Persuasion: How to Command Attention, Change Minds, and Influence People and Negotiate: The Art of Winning*. He advises companies how to use the tools and techniques of persuasion to close complex deals and develop leadership skills.

Harry is also chief executive of The Mills Group, an international consulting and training company, whose clients include IBM, PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Ernst & Young, Unilever, Toyota, and Oracle. He can be contacted at [harry.mills@millsonline.com](mailto:harry.mills@millsonline.com). The Mills Group's Web site is [www.millsonline.com](http://www.millsonline.com).

### Topic Source Notes

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## Steps

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## Tips

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## Tools

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## What Would You Do?

### What would you do?

A few months ago, Margaret was promoted to manager of facilities and land use. Recently, she read an interesting article about a new onsite child care program that many other companies like hers are implementing. Margaret believes this program would save the company money and generate more choices for employees, and she'd like to convince her supervisor and other key players in the company of the program's value. She feels certain that her organization would be better off implementing the new program.

But the company has a culture of maintaining a distinct separation between employees' personal and professional lives, and Margaret suspects that she may encounter some resistance to her idea.

### What would you do?

Before presenting her idea, Margaret needs to establish her credibility in the minds of her supervisors and peers. She also needs to decide who has the power to approve or reject her idea, who would be most affected by a change to the new program, and who most influences these decision makers and stakeholders.

Once she has identified these various audience members, Margaret should assess their receptivity to her idea and their willingness to take the actions required to approve and implement it. Based on her assessment, she then needs to structure her presentation in ways that appeal to her listeners and emphasize the advantages that they value. She also needs to anticipate and determine how she will address possible resistance.

In this topic, you'll learn how to change people's attitudes, beliefs, or behavior to align them with your perspective, support your ideas, and help implement your solutions.

How can Margaret convince others in her organization to adopt a new onsite childcare program when it would mean a significant change in the company's culture?

## Topic Objectives

This topic helps you to:

- Understand what persuasion is
- Build your credibility
- Gauge your audience's receptivity to your ideas as well as their decision-making style
- Appeal to listeners' sense of logic and connect emotionally with them
- Overcome resistance to your ideas
- Activate persuasion "triggers," or mental shortcuts your audience may take to decide whether to support your ideas
- Prompt your listeners to persuade themselves to back your proposals

## What is persuasion?



Talented persuaders have the power to capture an audience, sway others' opinions, and convert opponents to their cause. They wield influence and eloquence to convince others to align with their perspective, support their position or ideas, and help implement their solutions.

What exactly is persuasion? Persuasion is a process that enables you to change or reinforce others' attitudes, opinions, or behaviors. It can take place in a single meeting or over time through a series of discussions. Persuasion is a skill that's essential for success in all relationships—personal and business alike. What's more, persuasion is not just a matter of making a rational case, but about presenting information in a way that appeals to fundamental human emotions. It's about positioning an idea, approach, or solution in a way that appeals to the people who are affected by it.

In many ways, persuasion blends art and science. It's an art in that it requires the ability to establish trust and strong communication skills. It's a science in that it hinges on the disciplined collection and analysis of information and solidly researched principles of human behavior. By leveraging proven techniques, anyone can enhance his or her persuasion skills.

## Why is persuasion important?

“ The best way to shape the future is to influence it.”  
—Harry Mills

The applications of persuasion are virtually infinite.

An employee lobbying for a pay raise, a sales manager pitching the benefits of a new product line to a customer, a purchasing manager convincing a supplier to expedite shipment of an order—these are just a few examples of persuasion situations.

Many people, without even realizing it, draw upon their persuasion skills every day.

Profound changes in the business world have made persuasion a more critical managerial skill than ever:

- The days of executive command-and-control have given way to a business world increasingly characterized by cross-functional teams of peers, joint ventures, and intercompany partnerships.
- In some countries, many young people now entering the work force have come to maturity questioning authority.
- With the advent of electronic communication and globalization, ideas and people are flowing more freely than ever within and across organizations.

Clearly, formal authority no longer gets managers as far as it used to. To do their job—accomplishing work through others—managers must persuade others rather than simply issue orders.

## Key Idea: The elements of persuasion

### Key Idea

Persuasion is a complex process that requires careful preparation, back-and-forth dialogue, and a deep understanding of how people make decisions. Skilled persuaders engage in a mutual process of learning and negotiating with their audience. They focus on these four critical areas:

**Credibility.** Skilled persuaders establish their own credibility by acquiring expertise as well as building and cultivating positive, trusting relationships.

Next is **common ground**. Skilled persuaders frame goals on common ground, describing the benefits of the position they're advocating in terms of what they value and what others value.

Skilled persuaders use **supporting information** to reinforce their position with striking data mixed with compelling stories, examples, and images.

A **deep understanding of emotion** helps them understand and connect with their audience's emotions.

Successful persuaders connect with their audiences by focusing on four critical areas.

## The ethics of persuasion

“To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful.”  
—Edward R. Murrow

Persuasion is most effective when it's based on mutual gain and ethical behaviors. Ethical persuaders recognize the opportunities for mutual gain inherent in any situation. They legitimately leverage these opportunities to create win-win solutions. They also consider the long-term implications of everything they do. They know that unethical tactics can destroy in an instant a reputation of trust and credibility built over years.

Unfortunately, some persuaders use unethical behaviors. They exploit opportunities to deceive and manipulate others. For them, persuasion is a contest in which they win—and you lose. Such individuals focus on closing the short-term deal. They don't care how their behavior today might damage their reputation tomorrow. And they fail to build proposals based on mutual gain. In the long term, of course, their's is a losing strategy.

Persuading others involves more than creating a powerful, logical argument. It entails understanding all the factors—both conscious and unconscious—that motivate people in their decision making.

## Key Idea: The credibility equation

### Key Idea

Credibility is the cornerstone of persuasion. Without it, your audience won't commit time or resources to your idea or proposal. Your credibility manifests itself on two levels:

- **First, your ideas:** Are your ideas sound?

For example, does your notion for a new offering make sense in light of current market conditions and business concerns? Have you thought through all the ramifications?

- **Next, you as a person:** Are you believable? Trustworthy? Sincere? Have you proven yourself knowledgeable and well informed?

For instance, if you've proposed a new offering, do you have a solid understanding of its specifications, target markets, customers, and competition? Can others perceive that understanding?

Credibility can be understood in terms of this simple but powerful formula:

**Credibility = Trust + Expertise**

The more trust you earn and expertise you accumulate, the more credible you *and* your ideas become.

Credibility is the key to gaining others' acceptance and support of your proposal.

## Trust

When you fail to earn trust, listeners discount everything you say. By contrast, when people trust you and your ideas, they see you as believable, well informed, and sincere. They know that you have their best interests at heart. They also view you as possessing a strong emotional character (steady temperament) and integrity (honesty and reliability). Those qualities reinforce your appeal, which in turn makes people more inclined to accept your ideas.

How do you earn others' trust? Several ways:

- **Be sincere.** Demonstrate your conviction that your idea is worth others' time and attention. When people see you as sincere and committed, they will more likely trust you.
- **Build a track record of trustworthiness.** Follow through on promises and commitments you've made. Share or give credit to those who contribute good ideas. Present consistent values. By *behaving* in a trustworthy manner, you earn a reputation for *being* trustworthy.
- **Encourage the exploration of ideas.** Listen to others' concerns to encourage dialogue and demonstrate your openness to others' perspectives. Establish an environment where everyone can share their ideas and know that their opinions are valued.
- **Put others' best interests first.** When people believe that you have their interests in mind, they tend to trust you and your ideas more.

For instance, suppose a marketing director helps a valued direct report get promoted to a different department. Though the marketing director knows it's difficult to lose a top-notch team member, she accepts that her job includes helping others develop their professional skills. Besides helping her direct report, the marketing director earns the trust, not only of her direct report, but also of the other department head—which may come in handy in the future.

- **Use candor.** When you own up to your flaws, people see you as a truthful person—on the assumption that most individuals try to conceal their faults. Thus, an honest acknowledgment of any weaknesses in your proposal can help build trust with your audience.

## Expertise

Like trust, expertise enables you to build credibility. People see you as having expertise when you exercise sound judgment that proves you're knowledgeable about your ideas, and when you accumulate a history of successes.

To build or strengthen your expertise, consider these guidelines:

- **Research your ideas.** Find out everything you can about the idea you are proposing—by talking with knowledgeable individuals, reading relevant sources, and so forth. Collect pertinent data and information to support and contradict your idea so that you are well versed on the strengths and weaknesses of your idea.
- **Get firsthand experience.** Ask to be assigned to a team that will provide new insights into particular markets or products.
- **Cite trusted sources.** Back your position with knowledge gained from respected business or trade periodicals, books, independently produced reports, lectures, and experts within or outside your organization.
- **Prove it.** Launch small pilot projects to demonstrate that your ideas deserve serious consideration.

For example, if you're advocating a new process for your department, conduct a limited experiment with the process to generate firsthand information about its benefits.

- **Master the terminology.** Demonstrate that you know the verbal shorthand that people in your audience use. During meetings, industry conferences, and other business gatherings, listen closely for buzzwords. Make sure you understand their meaning—and use them in your business communications.
- **Don't hide your credentials.** If appropriate, let people know about any advanced degrees you've earned.

For example, a personal trainer who is launching a line of nutritional supplements would want to advertise her degree in nutrition alongside her credentials as a licensed physical therapist.

Note that in some companies, publicizing academic credentials is considered bad form. Doing so might hurt your credibility if your colleagues firmly believe that it's a person's ideas that count, not his or her degrees. If this describes your company's culture, think of all your relevant experience and knowledge that informs and supports your idea and relate it at every opportunity—if appropriate—to those with any influence or stake in your proposal.

- **Hire independent authorities.** Retain the services of an industry consultant or recognized outside expert to advocate your position. Their credibility will augment your own.
- **Gather endorsements.** Publicize accolades you've won for work related to your proposal—such as e-mails or letters of praise from satisfied customers, superiors, and peers. Be diplomatic in your self-promotion to avoid appearing arrogant or boastful and thus undermining support.

By establishing your trustworthiness *and* expertise, you build the credibility you'll need to get your audience's attention and interest. But to take the next step in the process, you also need to understand how your audience makes decisions.

## Identify decision makers, key stakeholders, and influencers

In some persuasion situations, you'll present your proposal to one person; in others, to several or many individuals at a time. In either case, your true audience will usually consist of several people: decision makers (people who approve or reject your idea), key stakeholders (those directly affected or impacted by the acceptance of your proposal), and influencers (those who can influence or persuade the stakeholders and decision makers).

Most persuasion situations involve several **decision makers**.

For example, if you want to hire an additional employee for your unit, and you're lobbying your supervisor for the funds, he or she may not be the only decision maker you need to persuade. Perhaps your supervisor's boss may have the final say on new hires.

To identify key **stakeholders**, think of all the individuals who stand to be most affected by acceptance of your proposal. In most cases, key stakeholders will include not only the person to whom you're presenting your proposal, but also individuals such as peers, direct reports, customers, superiors, and board members.

**Influencers** often participate in the decision-making process by providing advice and information to key stakeholders and decision makers. For example, if you're trying to persuade a marketing manager to



launch a new Web campaign, she might invite the head of information technology to participate in a meeting so that she can ask him questions and get his opinion on the matter.

Once you've identified all the individuals who make up your true audience, it's time to analyze them.

## Leadership Insight: Understand motivations

Universities, like any other organizations, need resources to finance the activities in which they're engaged. And philanthropy therefore in relation with donors is an important task of a university to be able to carry forward its mission. At one point I was trying to raise significant resources for one of the centers that I headed at the time so that we could do our work. And I brought together a donor who came to visit us with my faculty who would be able to tell the donor about the work that they were doing. And during the course of the meeting, I could see that the donor was not interested, just by looking at the body language. He was like a balloon deflating as the conversation went forward.

But the donor fortunately was generous not only in his willingness to help us but also in giving me time to persuade him. He had agreed to come for three days, and so I was quickly able to get a different cast of characters in front of him—a set of graduate students who were working on research projects as part of their dissertations. And you could see again in the new meeting, just by looking at the body language, how the donor was energized by the work that these bright young people were doing.

And as in sales, you have to persuade and you have to identify—for sales, a customer, and here, the donor—what is it that motivated the donor. The donor was especially motivated in trying to invest in the future. And the vehicle to get to the future was to invest in these very bright students to get there.

He was not all that interested in the faculty. He really was interested in facilitating the capacities of these bright young people to transform the world in which we live. So we reached the deal. He left at the end of the second day with a big smile, because he was sure that he had been able to turn the key that opens the gates of the future.

Customize your presentation so that it speaks to what drives your audience.

### Jorge I. Domínguez

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Jorge I. Domínguez serves many roles at Harvard University. He is Antonio Madero Professor of Mexican and Latin American Politics and Economics, Vice Provost for International Affairs, Senior Advisor for International Studies to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies.

He has authored and coauthored various titles including "Consolidating Mexico's Democracy: The 2006 Presidential Campaign in Comparative Perspective," "The Construction of Democracy: Lessons from Practice and Research," and "Between Compliance and Conflict: East Asia, Latin America, and the 'New' Pax Americana."



A past President of the Latin American Studies Association and a past Board Chairman of the Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities, Jorge currently serves on the Editorial Boards of Political Science Quarterly, Foreign Affairs en español, Cuban Studies, and Foro internacional and is a Contributing Editor to Foreign Policy. He was Series Editor for the Peabody Award-winning Public Broadcasting System television series, Crisis in Central America.

His current research focuses on the international relations and domestic politics of Latin American countries.

## Key Idea: Analyze your audience's receptivity

### Key Idea

Audiences differ in terms of what they may know about your proposal or idea, how interested they are in what you have to say, and how strongly they support your views—all of which influence their receptivity. To analyze audience receptivity:

- **Monitor reactions.** Look for signs of openness or resistance to you or your ideas in e-mails and other formal or informal communications from your intended listeners.
- **Assess body language.** Notice your listeners' tone of voice and body language during casual hallway conversations and other brief, informal exchanges. Does your intended audience seem interested in your ideas? Distracted by other concerns? Skeptical?
- **Talk with others.** Identify key influencers and other individuals who have a finger on the pulse of your audience's moods and expectations regarding important upcoming developments in the company. Ask these individuals for their thoughts about your listeners' likely receptivity to your idea. Ask them what they and the key decision makers and stakeholders value and care about most, as well as what benefits they see in your idea.

You might have a great proposal, but how can you gauge what others think of it?

## Categories of receptivity

Audiences generally fall within one of six categories of receptivity. The table below shows these categories, along with their corresponding persuasion strategies.

### Audience Receptivity and Persuasion Strategies

Audience Type	Persuasion Strategies
Hostile—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use humor or a story to</li> </ul>

disagrees with you	<p>"warm them up" to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on areas you agree on.</li> <li>• Demonstrate your expertise and cite experts.</li> <li>• Support statements with solid evidence.</li> <li>• Stress that you're looking for a win-win outcome.</li> <li>• Identify benefits that they would value.</li> </ul>
<b>Neutral</b> —understands your position but still needs convincing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spell out your proposition's benefits to listeners.</li> <li>• Present just three clear, compelling points, backed by expert evidence, data, and concrete examples.</li> <li>• Use stories, personal experiences, and anecdotes to appeal to their emotions.</li> <li>• Point out any downside of not accepting your proposal.</li> <li>• Discuss the alternatives you've considered or you believe others might raise.</li> </ul>
<b>Uninterested</b> —informed about your subject but doesn't care about it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grab their attention with a heart-stopping story, headline, or fact.</li> <li>• Show how the topic affects them.</li> <li>• Support your case with three to five compelling facts backed by expert testimony or statistics.</li> </ul>
<b>Uninformed</b> —lacks information needed to become convinced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish your credibility by showcasing your experience or qualifications.</li> <li>• Keep your presentation simple and straightforward; don't confuse them with complex evaluations.</li> <li>• Create an emotional link by sharing several personal anecdotes.</li> </ul>

<b>Supportive—</b> already agrees with you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recharge their enthusiasm with success stories and vivid testimonials.</li> <li>• Help them to anticipate and refute possible arguments from opponents.</li> <li>• Hand out a detailed action plan with clear deadlines.</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed—</b> contains a cross-section of attitudes and views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify listeners whom you most have to win over and who have the most power. Concentrate your efforts on them.</li> <li>• Appeal to different subgroups with different messages; for example, snack-food commercials promise kids great taste and parents nutrition.</li> <li>• Avoid promising everything to everyone.</li> </ul>

## Activity: Choose your persuasion strategy

Match the persuasion strategy to how receptive the audience is to the presenter's subject.

Rena only has a few minutes to present her new business idea for a chemical-free commercial cleaning business to a group of venture capitalists. Because the investors normally fund businesses serving the consumer market, Rena is worried that they may not understand the business model for commercial cleaning services.

How should Rena open her presentation?

☐ "So, a funny thing happened to me the other day..."

**Not the best choice.** Using humor is a good strategy when listeners are hostile (they disagree with you), not when they are uninformed—which is the case with the venture capitalists. Rena's audience members lack information about her business model, so she'll need a strategy other than humor to convince them that her proposal is worth exploring.

☐ "Our early product testers love knowing that our cleaning solutions contain natural ingredients."

**Not the best choice.** Presenting a product tester testimonial is a good strategy when listeners are supportive (they already agree with you), not when they are uninformed—which is the case with the venture capitalists. Rena's audience members lack information

about her business model, so she'll need a strategy other than a testimonial to convince them that her proposal is worth exploring.

- ☐ "As a professional in the commercial cleaning business for over twenty-two years, I am certain that this market needs our services."

**Correct choice.** The venture capitalists appear to be uninformed—they lack information about Rena's business model and need to be convinced that her proposal is worth exploring. For this type of audience, Rena needs to establish her credibility immediately—which she can do by presenting his qualifications.

Mark wants to persuade other managers in his company to support adoption of a new customer database system. His listeners agree that the organization needs to manage customer information more efficiently. However, he wants them to tout the benefits of the system to executives who need to be convinced.

What should Mark say in his presentation to the managers?

- ☐ "We all agree that our company needs to be better at managing customer data, and this new system will help us do that."

**Not the best choice.** Focusing on areas of agreement is a good strategy to use when listeners are hostile, not when listeners are supportive—which Mark's audience members are. The managers he's speaking to already agree with him that the company needs to improve its handling of customer data. To persuade them to support the idea with top executives, he'll need a different strategy than emphasizing areas of agreement.

- ☐ "The senior executives in this company are going to say that the new system is too expensive, but here's our response to their concern."

**Correct choice.** Mark's listeners are supportive—they already agree with him. So helping them to anticipate and refute possible arguments from opponents will equip them to promote his idea to top executives.

- ☐ "I just read an article in *Customer Relationship Management Today* saying that companies that use this system can increase customer loyalty by as much as forty percent."

**Not the best choice.** Sharing an attention-getting fact is a good strategy to use when listeners are uninterested (informed about your subject but uncaring about it), not when they're supportive—which Mark's audience members are. The managers he's speaking to already agree with him that the company needs to improve its handling of customer data. To prepare them to promote his idea to top executives, he'll need a different strategy.

Edna is a manager at a financial services firm. She is meeting with her employees to urge them to change the way they carry out a key business process—evaluating loan applications. She knows she's going to meet with resistance: When she broached the subject earlier, many of her team members said they believed that the current process was working just fine. They expressed concern that the changes she plans to propose would only make the application-evaluation process more time-consuming.

What should Edna say during the meeting?

☐ "By making the changes I'm recommending, we would speed up the loan-application approval process and generate more revenue for our department. This could lead to bigger bonuses for us all."

**Correct choice.** In this statement, Edna identifies benefits her employees may value and addresses their concern that the new process would be more time consuming. This statement would work well in this potentially hostile situation.

☐ "Experts in the area of business process improvement say that enhancing a process's efficiency can lead to higher profits for a company, greater productivity in the workforce, and better customer loyalty."

**Not the best choice.** Edna could make use of expert opinions to counter a possible hostile reaction, but this alone will not be enough to persuade her employees. She should consider supplementing this with benefits they may value and hard evidence.

☐ "When I was new in this business, I found it hard to change the way I did my work. I didn't want to learn new procedures for handling familiar tasks. So I understand your concerns about the changes I'm asking you to make."

**Not the best choice.** Offering a personal anecdote would be an effective strategy if Edna's employees were neutral toward the new process. Because they have serious concerns that indicate that they may be hostile toward the changes, Edna should consider a statement that includes benefits they may value.

## Decision-making styles

To further boost your odds of persuading those who have the power to accept or reject your proposal, tailor your arguments to fit their decision-making style. People have distinct styles of decision making. The table below lists five styles, their characteristics, and corresponding persuasion strategies.

### Decision-Making Styles and Persuasion Strategies

Decision-Making Style	Decision Maker's Characteristics	Persuasion Strategies
Charismatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially enthralled, but bases final decisions on balanced information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus discussion on results.</li> <li>Make simple, straightforward arguments.</li> <li>Use visual aids to demonstrate</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May mislead you into thinking you've scored an immediate success</li> </ul>	features and benefits of proposal.
<b>Thinker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cerebral, logical, and risk-averse</li> <li>• Needs extensive detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather as much supporting data as possible.</li> <li>• Use a fact-based approach to persuading.</li> </ul>
<b>Skeptic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges every data point</li> <li>• Decides based on gut feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish as much credibility as possible.</li> <li>• At the beginning of a meeting, invite them to challenge you—indicating you value their ideas and will use them to create the final idea or proposal.</li> </ul>
<b>Follower</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on own or others' past decisions to make choices</li> <li>• Takes plenty of time to decide whether to adopt idea</li> <li>• Follows the lead of bosses or others who are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on proven methods such as references and testimonials.</li> <li>• Understand whom they like to follow or defer to and get their support.</li> </ul>

	"politically important"	
<b>Controller</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemotional and analytical</li> <li>• Abhors uncertainty</li> <li>• Inclined to implement only his or her own ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your argument is sound and well structured.</li> <li>• Identify outcomes of value to them.</li> </ul>

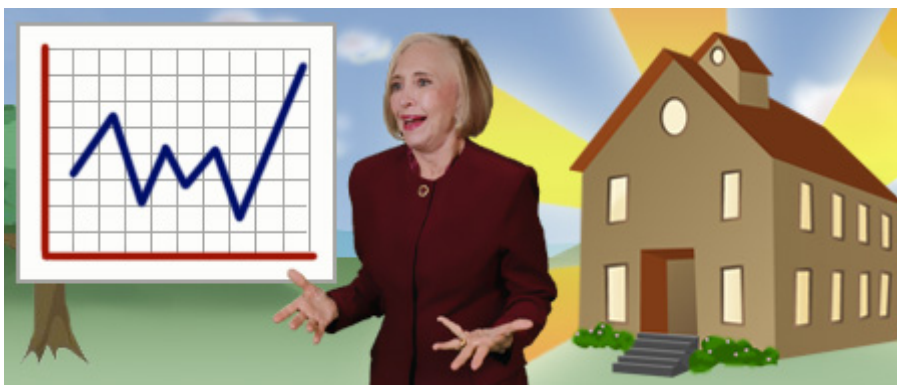
## Assess decision-making styles

How do you know which style your decision makers possess? As with analyzing your audience's receptivity, observe decision makers' behavior in meetings and hallway conversations and examine their communications for hints.

If your audience includes decision makers with whom you have little or no direct contact, learn about their decision-making habits through whatever means are available—such as others in the organization, news sources, public meetings, and so forth.

You've identified key stakeholders, decision makers, and influencers; analyzed your audience; and identified your decision makers' preferred styles. Now you're ready to take the next step: tailoring your presentation with the goal of winning your listeners' minds—and then their hearts.

## Appeal to reason



Reason *and* emotions play major roles in how people make business decisions. To persuade others, you thus need to win your listeners' *minds* and their *hearts*.

You can appeal to your listeners' reasoning power in several ways:

- The way you structure your presentation
- The evidence you provide to back up your proposal



- The benefits you emphasize
- The words you use

## Structure your presentation effectively

How do you decide what to say first, second, and so on in presenting a persuasive proposal? Sometimes your assessment of your audience's receptivity will influence the structure you select. At other times, your subject matter will suggest the appropriate structure. And you might decide to use one structure to present your case to one audience (for example, a receptive audience) and another to present the same case to another audience (such as a skeptical audience).

Consider the following examples of structures:

- **Problem-solution.** Describe a pressing problem, and then solve it by presenting a convincing solution. Use this structure with an uninterested audience, or one that's uninformed of the problem.
- **Presentation of both sides/refutation.** To win over neutral or outright hostile audiences, argue both sides. First present your opponents' side, which shows that you accept the validity of their position—thereby increasing their receptivity. Then refute their case by challenging their evidence and disproving their arguments.
- **Cause and effect.** Discuss the causes underlying a problem, and then show how your idea will remove those causes. Or, emphasize the undesirable effects of a problem, and explain how your proposal will mitigate those effects. Use this structure for mixed audiences.
- **Motivational sequence.** Capture your audience's *attention* with a startling statistic, anecdote, or joke—then identify a pressing *need*. Explain how your proposal will *satisfy* that need, and help listeners *visualize* the bright future in store if they adopt your proposal. Finally, tell your audience what actions you want them to take. Use this structure for supportive audiences.

How you begin and end your presentation is especially critical. Get your audience's attention right away with a dynamic opening. Conclude with a call for action in which you clearly indicate what you want from your listeners.

## Leadership Insight: Framing the big picture

Generally speaking, consultants have a pretty tough sales job. You've got to go in and tell a company that they're not doing something right, that they need outside help. Now the specific services that we offer is an even tougher sales job, because we don't go to companies that aren't doing well and say, "We can help fix you." In fact, we go to the companies that are doing spectacularly well, and we tell them, in essence, everything they're doing is wrong. If they keep doing that which has made them successful, they're ultimately going to perish.

It's a really tough message. So how do you persuade someone who has been successful, who seems to be doing everything right, that has been getting praise their entire career, that maybe they don't understand the whole picture?

Well, there are three tricks that we use. The first is we try to change the tenor of the discussion. We don't talk to them about their business, because they will always know their business better than we will. Instead, what we try to do is talk about history, talk about deep historical case studies of other great companies, companies like Digital Equipment Corporation or General

Motors or Sears, companies that at one time were widely admired that suddenly, seemingly, fell off a cliff.

We know those stories better than they do, and we begin to create a space for discussion that allows them to say, "Hey, maybe that which happened to them could happen to us."

The other thing we try to do is to help them learn through analogies. Again, we don't go in and say, "This is what you've got to do differently." Instead, we give them another case study and say, "How can we apply the learning from this to your context?" Asking them to do the work.

I never cease to be amazed. One of the classic case studies of disruptive innovation is how Nucor and the other steel mini-mills disrupted the large, integrated mills like US Steel. We'll go through this case study in all sorts of different industries, and people will say, "Huh. I've never thought about it before, but the same thing is happening to us."

They'll talk about the dimension of performance that in the steel industry is the quality of steel. They'll say, "For us, it's this." They'll talk about how the mini-mills started in the underbelly of the steel industry — rebar, reinforcing bars of steel to make concrete stronger. They'll say, "Our rebar is this." Using analogies gives people a very safe way to have a discussion.

The final thing that we do is we simplify the ask. We don't tell them, "Throw the playbook out. Stop doing everything you're doing, 180-degree shift." Instead, what we do is tell them to keep doing what they're doing and begin thinking about what small steps they can take to balance some of their activities.

We take them to what my colleague calls "The Land of And." You want to continue to be excellent at everything you're doing, and you want to create the ability to create tomorrow's great growth businesses. Changing the playing field, using analogies, and making it simple to say yes are ways that you can begin to persuade people to do things differently than they've done them in the past.

To convince successful companies to fine tune, talk about how they can improve upon what they already do well.

**Scott Anthony**  
**Managing Director, Innosight Ventures**

Scott Anthony is the Managing Director of Innosight Ventures, a consulting, training, and investment firm that works with Fortune 500 companies, startups, nonprofits, and national governments to improve their ability to create innovation-driven growth.

Previously, Scott was the President of Innosight's consulting arm, where he worked with Fortune 500 and startup companies in industries such as media, consumer products, investment banking, and health care.

Prior to joining Innosight, Scott was a senior researcher with Clayton Christensen, managing a group that worked to further Christensen's research on innovation.

He has written three books on innovation: "Seeing What's Next," with Harvard professor Clayton Christensen; "The Innovator's Guide to

Growth," with Mark Johnson, Joe Sinfield, and Elizabeth Altman; and "The Silver Lining: An Innovation Playbook for Uncertain Times."

He is a regular contributor to Harvard Business Online and serves as the editorial director of Strategy & Innovation, Innosight's biweekly publication.

Scott has a Bachelor of Arts in economics from Dartmouth College and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School.

## Activity: Find the best structure

Sophisticated persuaders adapt the structure of their presentations to the content and the audience's level of receptivity. Practice identifying the type of presentation to choose for different audiences.

Nadeera works as a business development manager at a large electronics manufacturing company. Her vice president recently asked her to evaluate the feasibility of expanding their business overseas. After extensive research, she feels certain that the best way to expand rapidly is to partner with another vendor that is already operating in their target markets. She must gain support for her proposal by presenting to multiple stakeholders across the organization.

Read each variation of Nadeera's proposal and choose which structure she has implemented.

Nadeera is making a presentation to a supportive audience—members of the sales team. Their bonuses depend on the company achieving higher sales growth rates.

"The international electronics market has experienced an annual growth rate of 23%, while the domestic growth rate has remained flat. If we want to remain profitable in the future, we must find a way to capture a share of this international growth by expanding rapidly, without adding too much to our operating expenses. Based on my extensive analysis, I believe that by partnering with a manufacturer already established in the countries we wish to enter, we can grow revenues at least 4% faster than our current competitors."

What structure has Nadeera implemented?

☐ Cause/effect

**Not the best choice.** Nadeera did not mention or explain the underlying cause for flat growth in the domestic market. The cause/effect structure is frequently used to address audiences with a mixed range of knowledge and emotional involvement with a proposal.

☐ Motivational sequence

**Correct choice.** Because Nadeera sensed that her audience was likely to be supportive, she created a motivational sequence by presenting a startling fact about the present and then conveyed the "bright future" that international expansion would bring.

☐ Presentation of both sides

**Not the best choice.** Nadeera did not present any alternative views to her proposal.

Nadeera's presentation is to mid-level managers in the customer service department. Some of these individuals are unaware of any issues in current sales growth:

"I have recommended to senior management that we form an international joint venture to take advantage of the 23% growth rate internationally. Our domestic market is saturated with competitors who offer low-cost alternatives to our product. Our five-year outlook shows that margins will shrink and we will likely have to lay off employees to cut costs. I see two paths for our company: invest heavily to develop a new product, or strategically partner with another manufacturer to launch our products abroad. From my vantage point, entering the international market is the best choice for remaining profitable."

☐ Cause/effect

**Correct choice.** Because Nadeera's audience was mixed, she presented the causes underlying the problem (saturation of the market) and how her solution would resolve these problems.

☐ Motivational sequence

**Not the best choice.** While Nadeera did offer a startling statistic and built the need in the beginning of her presentation, she did not help the mixed audience visualize the solution nor present a clear call to action.

☐ Presentation of both sides

**Not the best choice.** While Nadeera did offer an alternative to her proposal, she did not spend any time arguing for its merits.

Nadeera's presentation is to the analysts in the strategic planning department, who have observed international ventures undertaken by competitors fail, and who therefore favor domestic growth initiatives:

"Some believe that the answer to regaining market share and profitability lies in innovation. If we invest in developing a new niche product, we could potentially recapture domestic market share from our competitors. However, it's only a matter of time before competitors will respond with similar products, and we will find ourselves in this same position down the line. I am recommending we strategically partner with another manufacturer to launch our products in new, less saturated international markets. A strong partner will ease our entry into new markets, and we'll be able to generate revenues to fund future innovation."

☐ Cause/effect

**Not the best choice.** Nadeera did not discuss the problem of flat domestic growth and its impact on the company.

☐ Motivational sequence

**Not the best choice.** Nadeera did not create a compelling need in the beginning of her presentation, nor did she state a clear call to action.

☐ Presentation of both sides

**Correct choice.** Because the reception by Nadeera's "jaded" audience would likely range from neutral to hostile, she chose to present both sides of the argument in her presentation. She first acknowledged the merits of the opposition (innovation would lead

to market share) and then refuted them. Similarly, she acknowledged the risks of entering new markets, and then suggested the partnership would mitigate those risks.

## Provide compelling evidence

“ The real message isn't what you say. It's what the other person remembers. ”  
 –Harry Mills

The evidence you provide to support your proposal—such as testimonials, examples, statistics, and graphic evidence—can further strengthen your persuasiveness.

- **Testimonials** enhance persuasiveness when they come from sources your audience considers expert and credible.

For instance, if you're advocating the adoption of a new technology, provide quotations from companies similar to yours that have adopted the technology with excellent results.

- **Examples** further capture people's attention by turning generalizations and abstractions into concrete proof. To illustrate, cite examples of what a proposed new technology can accomplish.
- **Statistics** become especially effective if you make them understandable and memorable. How? Help people grasp the enormity of large numbers.

For example, to convey \$1 trillion, say, "If you were to count a trillion one-dollar bills—one every second, 24 hours a day—it would take you 32 years." Personalize numbers; for instance, "Four out of 10 people in this room exaggerate their expenses." Cite eye-popping comparisons, such as "Our main competitor processes orders 50 times faster than we do."

- **Graphic evidence**, such as slides, flipcharts, videotapes, and product samples, can further boost your success. That's because three-quarters of what people learn they acquire visually. Choose a medium that's appropriate to your message; convey one concept per slide or other visual; and consider the psychological impact of colors.

Red, for example, means something different to financial managers than it does to engineers.

When creating charts and tables, first determine the main trends or patterns you want to emphasize, then take care not to distort or misrepresent information.

When carefully selected and compellingly presented, evidence in all its forms can win over your listeners through reason.

## Spotlight benefits your listeners value

The features of your idea—such as how a new computer you're advocating works—may interest your listeners. But its **benefits**—how the idea will *help* your audience—most strongly attract listeners'

attention. Persuaders who fail to answer their listeners' question, "What's in it for me?" stand little chance of winning their minds.

To understand this firsthand, consider the following table, which lists a computer's features and benefits. Which column do *you* find most appealing?

**Features and Benefits**

Features	Benefits
The latest microprocessor	Lets you work faster and use the latest applications
A 10-gigabyte hard drive	Enables you to store more data and access and update it faster
A flat-screen monitor	Makes it easier to view more, while occupying less desk space than traditional monitors

Each benefit may appeal to listeners on one of two primary levels of motivation—the desire for gain and the fear of loss.

- A benefit may enable listeners to gain something they *don't* currently have—for example, money, time, popularity, possessions, or a good reputation.
- A benefit may enable listeners to avoid losing something they currently have.

Research shows that the fear of loss is actually a more powerful motivator than the prospect of gain.

For example, the fear of losing money you already have is a more powerful motivator than gaining money you don't have!

Think about which benefits your audience would value most. Then develop a **unique value proposition** (or UVP) for your proposal by asking these questions:

- What benefits does my proposal provide? What will my audience gain? What will they avoid losing?
- What evidence shows that these benefits are real? Are there compelling and credible testimonials, examples, statistics, and graphic representations available?
- What makes my proposal unique? What's different and unusual about my idea? Why should my audience accept my proposal and not others'?

By spotlighting the unique advantages of your proposition, you convince listeners that your idea merits serious consideration.

## Activity: Features or benefits?

Your audience is likely asking the question "What's in it for me?" Answer that question by focusing on benefits rather than features. Show that you can correctly identify the difference between features and benefits.

Decide if each statement below describes a feature or benefit of a new computer-based reimbursement system.

Has customizable approval paths.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Correct choice.** This is a feature because it does not explicitly state how customizable approval paths are an advantage to the user.

☐ Benefit

**Not the best choice.** This is a feature because it does not explicitly state how customizable approval paths are an advantage to the user.

Eliminates delays, so you are reimbursed quickly.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Not the best choice.** This is a benefit because it conveys the resulting advantage (faster reimbursement).

☐ Benefit

**Correct choice.** This is a benefit because it conveys the resulting advantage (faster reimbursement).

You never have to worry about your report getting lost.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Not the best choice.** This is a benefit because it states that the user will be protected against reports being lost.

☐ Benefit

**Correct choice.** This is a benefit because it states that the user will be protected against reports being lost.



Contains a library of expense forms for most types of projects.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Correct choice.** This is a feature, rather than a benefit, because it does not explain how this library of expense forms could help a potential user.

☐ Benefit

**Not the best choice.** This is a feature, rather than a benefit, because it does not explain how this library of expense forms could help a potential user.

Includes a comprehensive help system so that technical assistance is at your fingertips.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Not the best choice.** This is a benefit because it explicitly states that the help system provides immediate assistance.

☐ Benefit

**Correct choice.** This is a benefit because it explicitly states that the help system provides immediate assistance.

Sends automated emails after reports are approved.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Correct choice.** This is a feature because it does not tie these automated emails directly to the potential user.

☐ Benefit

**Not the best choice.** This is a feature because it does not tie these automated emails directly to the potential user.

An auto-fill system reduces your risk of math errors.

Is this a feature or a benefit?

☐ Feature

**Not the best choice.** This item is a benefit because it describes the advantage for the potential user.

☐ Benefit

**Correct choice.** This item is a benefit because it describes the advantage for the potential user.

## Select the right words

The words you select can strongly determine whether your listeners consider your proposal.

Your selection of words	Example of what to say	Example of what <i>not</i> to say
<b>Affirmative language,</b> communicating precisely what you expect to happen	" <i>When</i> you finish that report, we'll celebrate by going out for a pizza."	" <i>If</i> you finish that report, we'll celebrate by going out for a pizza."
<b>Assertive speech,</b> presenting your arguments with confidence	" <i>I believe</i> that our project needs additional funding."	" <i>I would guess</i> that our project needs additional funding."
<b>Acceptance of responsibility</b> for your circumstances	" <i>I'll</i> have the person who is responsible phone you."	" <i>I can't help you.</i> "
<b>Win-win language</b> that fosters cooperation	"That's a new approach. <i>Let's talk it through</i> to	"Maybe you should run some numbers, <i>because I</i>

	see where we end up."	<i>don't see that working."</i>
Phrasing that makes people trust your <b>integrity</b>	" <i>This is a much better deal for you than the previous one.</i> "	" <i>To be perfectly honest, I think this deal is perfect for you.</i> "

Whenever possible—and only when appropriate to your audience—sprinkle attention-grabbing words, such as "easy," "free," "guaranteed," "proven," and "results," throughout your persuasion communications. Most of these are borrowed from sales, and, despite their heavy use, are remarkably tried-and-true in their effectiveness.

By structuring your presentation effectively, providing the best evidence, spotlighting your proposal's benefits, and selecting the right words, you boost your chances of winning your listeners' minds. Now let's see how to capture their hearts.

## Key Idea: Appeal to emotions

### Key Idea

The most logical argument won't persuade people unless you've also connected with them on an emotional level. In fact, emotions play an even more powerful role in human decision making than facts, numbers, and a rational assessment of a proposal's benefits. Why? For several reasons:

- Emotion-evoking presentations—such as gripping stories—are more interesting and memorable than statistics and facts.
- Emotion tends to prompt behavioral changes more quickly than logical appeals do. Responding emotionally requires less effort than logically weighing the pros and cons of a presentation.
- Emotion-arousing arguments distract people from noticing the speaker's intention to persuade.

In the most successful persuasive situations, people *first* accept the presenter's proposal unconsciously, based on their emotional response. *Then* they justify their decision based on a logical assessment of the facts.

The language you choose and the way you compose your argument exert a major impact on listeners' emotions. Use the following tools freely in presenting your ideas:

- Vivid descriptions
- Metaphors
- Analogies
- Stories

Arguments containing logical appeals are effective, but arguments combined with emotional appeals can be riveting.

## Vivid descriptions



Vivid descriptions—words that paint evocative images in people's minds—deeply tap into listeners' emotions.

For example, suppose you want to persuade your supervisor to approve a new policy that will enable some employees to telecommute several days each week. You anticipate that your supervisor will worry that telecommuting may reduce worker productivity.

To persuade him otherwise, you vividly describe team members working diligently from their home offices, free of the many distractions that crop up in the office on a typical workday. You contrast that picture with one of employees being frequently interrupted by well-meaning coworkers who stop by to chat. As you paint these images in your supervisor's mind, he begins experiencing two emotions: a desire for a more focused, industrious staff, and an aversion to the disruptive reality you've described. He agrees to consider telecommuting as a viable alternative.

## Metaphors

A **metaphor** is an imaginative way of describing something as something else, for example, "Time is money." **Organizing metaphors** are overarching worldviews that shape a person's everyday actions; for instance, "Business is war."

People reveal their organizing metaphors through the language they use when speaking about the issue at hand.

For example, a manager who sees business as war might say things like, "We can't concede ground," "We're being outflanked," or "We have to defend market share."

To change someone's organizing metaphor:

1. Identify a compelling replacement metaphor; for example, "business as partnership." This metaphor focuses a business's efforts on building win-win relationships with key stakeholders, rather than on defeating competitors.
2. Highlight the weaknesses of your audience's worldview using their metaphor.

For example, "By focusing on competitors instead of customer support, we've allowed our customer-satisfaction levels to fall."

3. Provide examples of other companies that have achieved success using your replacement metaphor, as in "ABC's sales have increased 18% since the company appointed account managers to collaborate with the sales team."

Replacing someone's organizing metaphor is never easy—people cling tightly to their worldviews. But by providing powerful evidence of the flaws in an existing metaphor and the veracity of the new one, you can persuade others to at least consider a different outlook.

## Analogies

**Analogies**—comparisons that include the words "like" or "as"—enable you to relate a new idea to one that's already familiar to your audience. Analogies help people understand and, therefore, accept a new idea. Analogies also engender feelings of familiarity, which many people find reassuring.

Incongruous analogies and those that use humor are all the more memorable.

For example, when Benjamin Franklin once said, "Fish and visitors start to smell in three days," he delivered a vivid message of why people tire of visitors who outstay their welcome.

## Stories



The Golden Rule of Persuasion—listen to others as you would have them listen to you.

—Harry Mills

Stories also help make presentations come alive and drive messages home. They can accomplish the following:

- Grab listeners' attention with riveting plots and characters audiences can relate to
- Simplify complex ideas and make them concrete
- Evoke powerful emotions among listeners
- Stay in your audience's mind long after the facts have been forgotten

For instance, consider a product design manager who wants his team to generate innovative design ideas. His company is located in a region where many people have strong ties and allegiances to the local community. The manager evokes intense emotions in his team by telling the story of how outside competition is destroying businesses in his hometown. He tells of firms that have closed, childhood friends who have had to move, and office buildings that lay abandoned. He concludes his story by challenging his team to come up with ideas for "made here at home" products. His team responds with a number of practical yet innovative design ideas that tap local strengths and talents.

Clearly, language can help you connect with your audience's emotions and win their hearts. But no matter how skillfully you use language to appeal to listeners' reason and emotions, you'll likely encounter at least some resistance to your proposals. Read on to learn strategies for overcoming resistance.

## Leadership Insight: High-impact story telling

One of the lessons I've learned when you're presenting an idea or a recommendation to senior decision makers is that those decision makers have to connect with your presentation at both an intellectual level and at an emotional level. And one of the ways you can create that kind of connection is to embed stories into your presentation. A great example that comes to mind for me is one of my largest clients. They're a Fortune 100 company. They are right now making a big play into some new areas where they've never worked before. And they're really trying to transform how they're perceived in the marketplace. Now the head of global sales, he's pretty new at his job. Obviously he's got a lot at stake at this.

And one of the conclusions he came to was, if they were going to do this successfully, they've got to do a much better job in the field telling their stories. And this is where I got involved. And the first thing I did is I went out in the field and I met with a number of their salespeople. And I asked them, "Do you use stories when you're talking to your customers? Specifically, do you use stories when you're talking to decision makers?" And I heard from everybody, "Of course we do."

And I really wasn't surprised by that. They said, "I use stories all the time. I couldn't do my job without doing stories." But then I asked people, "Can you give me an example of these stories?" And this is where I got kind of a surprise, because just about everybody shared the same thing — typically describing a problem or a challenge that a customer had, and the solution that was put out there to address it. And then ultimately the results that were achieved from that solution. And you know what? That's not a story.

It's a great reference case, serves a purpose in the presentation, it certainly adds credibility. But it doesn't connect on an emotional level. So where we went and what we did for these people on the field is we really taught them an ancient art, storytelling. And we're talking about the type of storytelling that's been around 1,000 years, that crosses culture. The type of storytelling that probably when we're not working is in our DNA. It's what we do over dinner. It's what we do when people get together. And you know what? There's four simple elements to a story. And the most important one is, you got to have a main character.

A good story is about a person or an identifiable group of people. And they should be people that the decision makers are talking to can identify with. See themselves in that shoes. Maybe even empathize with them. And if you think about it, you know. Let's take the movie "Jaws." It's about three guys in a boat. Now let's talk about the boat, because that brings you to the next element. You've got to have a setting. And that setting again should be something that people can visualize, that they can see themselves in, that they can relate to.

And now with the setting and character established, that's kind of once-upon-a-time stuff. We come to the third element, and that third element is the fun part. You got to have an exciting incident and some events that follow. I like to call them sharks, so we'll keep that "Jaws" theme. You've got to have a shark. And if one shark is good, two, three sharks are better. People love to hear about problems, challenges, things that went wrong. The bad things, that's what really draw people into a story. And then finally, you want to go to that fourth element, that final element. And that's the resolution of the story.

It's got to be believable. It's got to be credible. It may end happily. It may be a cautionary tale. Both are good. But the most important thing is it should make a point. There should be a lesson learned, because that's the whole reason you're telling the story. The other thing we learned about this is moviemakers have it made. They've got a couple hours to tell a story.

If you're talking to business decision maker, you've got maybe two minutes to tell your story or they're going to get bored, they're going to get distracted, they're going to lose interest.

It's kind of like what Steven Denning said, the storytelling guru in the business world. He said, the trick is to get rid of all that mind-numbing detail and turn it into something you tell in a couple of minutes that somehow or another for the listener fills in all the detail you left out. That's part of the magic of story. The most important piece, though, is to always remember to really make your stories effective, it's got to be about a person or those identifiable groups of people.

A great story has four elements: a character, a setting, a resolution — and sharks.

### **Brad Holst**

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Brad and his team have designed and delivered strategic and tactical communication training and coaching solutions for Mandel's corporate clients in the Fortune 1,000 size range, in a wide variety of industries.

He is the lead creator of the proprietary models and processes now found in Mandel's powerful suite of communication content-planning and delivery tools and techniques, including the Mandel Blueprint™ and the Mandel Story Board™.

Brad is a masterful teacher, coach, and consultant, with a rare level of business acumen based on his prior leadership roles with three market-leading companies: The Walt Disney Company, The Clorox Company, and Armor All Products. Web site: [www.mandel.com](http://www.mandel.com).

## **Key Idea: Roots of resistance**

### **Key Idea**

You've taken steps to win your audience's minds and hearts—yet you're still encountering resistance from some listeners. What's going on? The fact is, even the most carefully thought out proposal can meet with resistance. For any number of reasons, one or more of your listeners have made up their minds, and you simply can't sway them.

Resistance can stem from several sources. One listener may have from the outset committed to a strong position that diametrically opposes yours. Another may disagree with your idea on technical grounds. Yet another may resist for philosophical reasons—

For example, he believes that commercial development should be minimized in favor of preserving park lands.



Resistance also takes many different forms—from head shaking to silent disagreement to outright verbal attacks—none of which translates into action supporting your plan.

How do you move resisters around to your point of view? The key lies in understanding *their* position and then presenting the benefits of your idea to them in terms of what they value.

The following guidelines can help:

- Identify resisters' interests.
- Understand resisters' emotions.
- Listen to resisters' concerns.
- Ensure consistent verbal and nonverbal messages.
- Present resisters' viewpoints before your own.

Even the best planned proposal can be met with audience resistance. How can you move others to support your point of view?

## Identify resisters' interests

Each person's unique experiences shape his or her views of the world and influence how that individual responds to others' ideas. If you encounter resistance after presenting a proposal, avoid the temptation to keep pressing your case. Instead, think about what may be driving a resister to disagree with you. Then adapt your response accordingly.

For example, suppose you want funding to conduct a study on the merits of entering a new market. The head of research and development (R&D) opposes your plan. She is concerned that entering a new market might direct company resources away from a project she wants to pursue. In this case, you might want to address her fears in your presentation, providing information on how entering a promising new market may generate more revenues for the company, which could in turn fund a broad range of new projects for the R&D group.

## Understand resisters' emotions

Most resistance springs from two emotions:

- **Fear.** Your audience doesn't like *your idea* because of its potential consequences.

For instance, listeners may worry that a proposed restructuring will cost them their jobs.

- **Distrust.** Your audience doesn't like *you* or what you represent.

For example, perhaps that R&D manager tends to view marketers as flaky and shortsighted.

By understanding the emotions driving resistance, you can take the next steps to addressing listeners' fears (e.g., how likely is it that the restructuring will end in lost jobs?) or addressing their objections to you as a person so as to improve the relationship.

## Listen to resisters' concerns

One powerful way to improve relationships entails building trust by listening closely to resisters' concerns. By listening, you demonstrate that you understand and value these individuals as well as their concerns and ideas. When people feel that they've been heard and that their ideas are valued, they become more open to considering *your* ideas.

The following techniques can help:

- **Paraphrase.** Mirror the resister's points.

For example, "So you're saying that you think I'm just advancing the party line." Paraphrasing prompts your listener to respond with comments such as, "Well, yeah—I do." By getting the person to agree with you—even in this small way—you establish common ground, which enables the individual to become more receptive to your ideas.

- **Clarify the issues.** Identify the resister's primary concerns.

For instance, "So what I hear you saying is that you have two main problems. The first one you mentioned is probably the most important, right?" Again, you've established a level of understanding and agreement. You've also shown that you're capable of sorting out the vital issues.

## Ensure consistent verbal and nonverbal messages



Check that your body language, tone of voice, and other aspects of nonverbal communication reinforce the spoken part of your message. If they don't, your resisters may view you as not credible or as conflicted about your position—which can stiffen their resistance even further.

For example, to telegraph confidence in your position, check that your posture is upright, your gestures assertive, your gaze direct, and your voice loud enough to be heard—but not so loud as to intimidate or annoy listeners.

Many successful persuaders rehearse nonverbal behaviors just as much as their spoken presentations before going before an audience.

Effective persuaders also recognize when they are becoming overly emotional or angry—two behaviors that are inappropriate in many persuasion situations. They recover by openly acknowledging and apologizing for such behaviors. Having the courage to publicly admit a mistake in this way can help further establish trust and credibility.

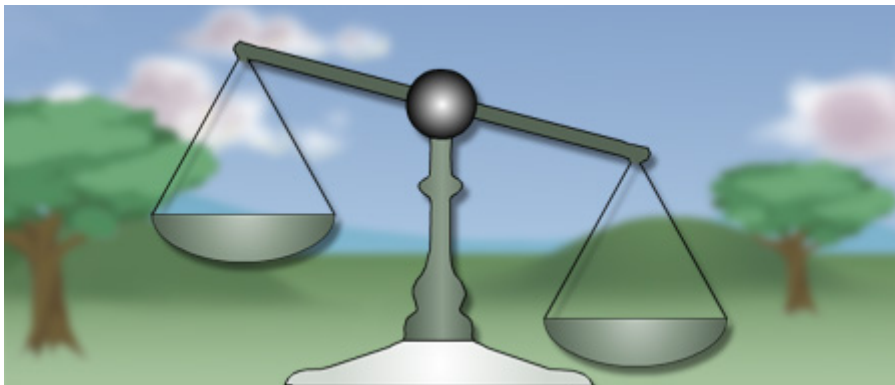
## Present resisters' viewpoints before your own

If you suspect ahead of time that you'll encounter resistance from listeners, prepare a two-sided argument: theirs *and* yours. During your presentation, acknowledge your resisters' arguments *first*. You'll disarm these individuals by removing the opportunity for them to oppose you. Deprived of this opportunity, they'll be more open to discussion and will participate in solving the problem at hand.

Next, present *your* argument—clearly showing how it provides a more powerful solution than your opponents' argument does. When possible, show how you've incorporated resisters' ideas, interests, values, and concerns into your solution.

In addition to addressing resistance, you can boost your persuasion skills by understanding the mental shortcuts people take when trying to decide whether to support or reject a proposal.

## Conscious and unconscious responses



People respond to persuasion in two ways: consciously and unconsciously. If someone's in a *conscious mode*, he or she might respond thoughtfully to a proposal, weighing its pros and cons and attending carefully to the logic and content of the message.

In an ideal world, everyone would make decisions in this way. But in reality, many people don't have the time, information, or motivation to do so. They therefore switch their decision making to an *unconscious mode*, which means they spend less time processing information. They make decisions based more on instinct than on reason. And they resort to persuasion triggers, or mental shortcuts, to decide how to respond to a proposal.

For example, Joe, a manager, might choose to accept a deal offered by Sue, a supplier's representative, over an idea offered by Bob—even though Sue's proposal is inferior to Bob's. Why? Joe likes Sue and she once did him a favor.

Researchers have identified seven persuasion triggers:

- Contrast
- Liking
- Reciprocity
- Social proof
- Commitment and consistency
- Authority
- Scarcity

## Contrast

“ I didn't have 3,000 pairs of shoes.  
I only had 1,060. ”  
—Imelda Marcos

Judgment, like beauty, is always relative. So when people make decisions, they often look for a benchmark to base their decision on.

For instance, suppose the first candidate you interview for a marketing manager position seems far too expensive when she asks for a starting salary of \$89,000. Her request starts to look much more reasonable when you contrast her against the only other suitable candidate, who wants \$110,000.

To activate the Contrast trigger, start by creating a benchmark to "anchor" the judgments of the person you need to persuade. Many salespeople do this by first showing you the most expensive item in a product line. This makes a midpriced item seem that much more affordable.

## Liking

“ Flattery will get you anywhere. ”  
—Jane Russell

Human beings tend to accept the ideas of people they like. Liking, in turn, arises when people feel liked by another person and when they share something in common with him or her.

For example, at direct sales engagements (where products are sold by a company representative in a person's home), invited guests (usually friends and neighbors of the host) buy more if they have a fondness for their host and feel that they share a bond with him or her.

How might you activate the Liking trigger? Create bonds with peers, supervisors, and direct reports by informally discovering common interests—whether it's a shared alma mater, a passion for whitewater rafting, or a love of cooking. Demonstrate your liking for others by expressing genuine compliments and making positive statements about their ideas, solutions, abilities, and qualities.

## Leadership Insight: The power of inquiry

One of the most useful lessons I think I've learned is the power of inquiry to help you to be persuasive. I learned this in a rather difficult way at a class that I took. It was a communications class, and I remember the instructor had given us a short lecture about how powerful inquiry was and how it was much more effective at persuading people than straight advocacy was. And I thought this all made a lot of sense and after the lecture she asked us to do an exercise. And in the exercise she paired us up and she asked one person to be a seller and one person to be a buyer.

And so I got paired up with a woman whose name was Ellen. I went first as the seller and I tried to sell Ellen my car. And I tried to think of all the things that would be attractive in a car, and so I told her things like it was a convertible and she said that she wasn't really that impressed by that because she didn't like to spend a lot of time out in the sun.

I told her that it had got great gas mileage. She told me that she walked to work and only drove on weekends and not very far. So everything that I could come up with she wasn't very

impressed with, and by the time the time was up I had not made a sale.

And then we switched places and Ellen tried to sell me. And so Ellen, the first thing that she said was, "Do you like antiques?" And at that moment I thought, "Oh, that's right! This is all a course about inquiry and I completely missed the point." So I thought, well, good for you, Ellen.

Of course it was lucky, I thought, that she had come up with something that actually I was interested in. And I said, yes, I liked antiques. And then she asked me another question. She said, "What is it about antiques that you like?"

And so I shared that I liked the fact that there's a story associated with an old object. You know, how it was used, who it belonged to, all those kind of things I find interesting. So she said to me, "Well, I have an antique silver vase that belonged to my great aunt and it has a wonderful story associated with it. Would you like to hear it?" So at this point I was completely hooked. I said, yes, I would like to hear it. And she told me and I ended up buying this vase from her.

And it was an important lesson for me. First of all, because obviously, when you inquired to understand about someone's interest and needs, you are much more able to be persuasive with them whether you are trying to sell something or convince them of an argument.

The other thing that it really impressed on me was how difficult it is to let go of advocacy. That when we have something we feel really strongly about, we tend to advocate. And it's often, especially when we are talking to somebody who has a different point of view — as I did, talking with Ellen — it's very hard to make progress without really understanding the person and that inquiry, not advocacy, is the way to do that.

Successful persuasion starts with inquiry to uncover peoples' interests.

**Sharon Grady**  
**President, The Grady Company**

Sharon Grady is the President of The Grady Company, a consulting firm which provides executives with the communication and conflict-management skills that drive their success as leaders. She specializes in teaching individuals and teams to excel at the challenging conversations they typically avoid or manage ineffectively.

Prior to founding The Grady Company, Sharon was a consultant with Monitor and with Mercer Management Consulting, and served as Chief Operating Officer of Interaction Associates, a global provider of collaboration consulting and leadership education.

She previously worked on Capitol Hill, as a staff aide to U.S. Senator Abraham Ribicoff, and as press secretary to U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Kennelly.

Sharon holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Wesleyan University and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. She studied Advanced Negotiation at Harvard Law School, is a trained mediator, and speaks fluent Spanish. Her website is:  
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## Reciprocity

People feel a deep urge to repay favors in kind. This drive to reciprocate exists in all societies.

For instance, when fundraisers enclose a small, seemingly insignificant gift in an envelope to potential donors, the volume of donations increases markedly.

To activate the Reciprocity trigger, the rule is: Give before you ask. A small favor like lending a fellow manager one of your staff members for a few days might be repaid fivefold when you later ask for that manager's support on an important project. In considering what to give, look for solutions that meet other individuals' interests and needs as well as your own.

## Social proof



Individuals are more likely to follow another person's lead if what they are advocating is popular, standard practice, or part of a trend. A person who dresses or speaks vastly differently from his or her immediate colleagues or who comes from a markedly different culture usually starts with a persuasion handicap.

How do you activate the Social Proof trigger? Remember the power of association: Make a connection (yourself, your company, or your product) to individuals and organizations your audience admires. Use peer power to influence horizontally, not vertically.

For instance, if you're trying to convince a group of resistant people about the merits of a new project, ask a respected employee in the organization who supports the initiative to speak up for it in a team meeting. You'll stand a better chance of persuading your colleagues with this person's testimony.

## Commitment and consistency

People are more likely to embrace a proposal if they've made a voluntary, public, and written commitment to doing so.

For example, 92% of residents of an apartment complex who signed a petition supporting a new recreation center later donated money to the cause.

To activate the Commitment and Consistency trigger, make others' commitments voluntary, public, and documented.



Suppose, for instance, that you want to persuade an employee to submit reports on time. To inspire this behavior, link the commitment to timely reporting to the person's values (mention its benefits for team spirit). Get that understanding in writing (a memo). And make the commitment public (mention your colleagues' agreement with the memo).

If getting a commitment is difficult, start small. Once you have activated this trigger, you can later turn a small commitment into a large one.

## Authority

Many people are trained from childhood to automatically obey the requests of authority figures such as parents, doctors, and police. Authority comes from a combination of position and its associated credentials.

For example, your authority as a manager in a drug company will be enhanced if you possess medical as well as business qualifications.

Appropriate clothes or other trappings of authority can also increase the chances of successful persuasion. A businessperson who "power dresses" for an important presentation improves the odds that his pitch will be successful.

To activate the Authority trigger, make sure the people you want to persuade are aware of the source of your authority. Leverage appropriate clothing and other trappings of authority as well.

## Scarcity

“ The advantage of emotions is that they lead us astray. ”  
—Oscar Wilde

When something is in scarce supply—such as information, opportunities, and resources—people value it more.

For instance, in one experiment, wholesale beef buyers were told that they were the only ones who had received information on a possible beef shortage. Their orders jumped 600%.

To activate the Scarcity trigger, use exclusive information to persuade.

For example, capture key decision makers' attention by saying something like, "I just got this information today. It won't be distributed until next week."

Be sure the information that you use is truly exclusive; otherwise, it could hinder your credibility. To get the most persuasive power from the seven triggers, use them in combination rather than one at a time.

## Activity: Name that persuasion trigger

People often respond unconsciously to what experts call persuasion triggers. Practice identifying triggers and understanding their distinguishing characteristics, so you can use them more effectively in your own persuasion efforts.



The largest conference in your industry is coming up in seven months. The marketing department just received an email from the conference that said, "Don't miss out! Book your conference reservation today, before all the hotel rooms have been taken."

What persuasion trigger is the conference's marketing department using?

☐ Reciprocity

**Not the best choice.** The email did not offer anything in return for booking a conference reservation; for example, "Save 10% on your reservation fee by booking today." Thus reciprocity is not the persuasion trigger in use here.

☐ Social proof

**Not the best choice.** The email did not associate the conference with any popular groups or timely trends; for example, "Attendance at this conference has doubled each year over the past five years. Want to get in on the action? Register now!" Thus social proof is not the persuasion trigger in use here.

☐ Scarcity

**Correct choice.** The email implied that hotel rooms may soon be in short supply, thus activating the scarcity trigger. When something is scarce, people tend to value it more.

You've just met with Harry, an account manager from AdRight, a marketing firm you're considering hiring to develop an advertising campaign for a new product. Harry explains that AdRight's fee for the work would be \$20,000 if AdRight handles any print buying and press checks for printed brochures associated with the campaign. He then states that the fee would be \$15,000 if AdRight does not handle those tasks.

Which persuasion trigger is Harry using?

☐ Contrast

**Correct choice.** Harry has used the contrast trigger by presenting you with the most expensive option in AdRight's service menu first. The \$20,000 fee serves as an "anchor" by which you evaluate the other option—which (compared to \$20,000) seems more manageable. Harry is hoping that by presenting you with these two options, you'll be drawn to the less expensive one and select his company to do the work.

☐ Liking

**Not the best choice.** Harry hasn't demonstrated any effort to create a bond with you through the discovery of common interests or through expressing compliments; for example, "We see the world through customers' eyes, just like you do, and we want to help you make your already excellent ad campaigns even better." Thus, Harry is not using the liking trigger.

☐ Authority

**Not the best choice.** Harry hasn't tried to make you aware of any trappings of authority on his part—such as showing up dressed in a power suit and emphasizing his credentials as an advertising account manager. Thus, he is not using the authority trigger.

You've agreed to serve as this year's manager for a fundraising drive that your company has approved for a major charitable organization that supports cancer care. You post a sign-up sheet on your company's intranet where employees can indicate how much they're contributing to the fundraising drive.

Which persuasion trigger are you using?

☐ Scarcity

**Not the best choice.** You haven't suggested to employees that something valuable to them (such as information, opportunities, or resources) is in short supply; for example, by telling people that they have only two more days to sign up for the fundraising drive. Thus, you're not using the scarcity trigger.

☐ Commitment and consistency

**Correct choice.** By making employees' contributions to the fundraising drive voluntary, public, and documented, you're using the commitment and consistency trigger. People are more likely to embrace a proposal if they've willingly committed to it, if their commitment is made public, and if their commitment is in writing.

☐ Social proof

**Not the best choice.** You haven't made a connection between the fundraising drive and individuals or organizations that employees admire; for example, by pointing out to employees that workers at your company's biggest competitor have donated more than ever to this same charitable cause this year. Thus, you're not using the social proof trigger.

## What is audience self-persuasion?



In mastering the art and science of persuasion, you have a wide range of strategies at your disposal. These include establishing your credibility, understanding your audience, and capturing listeners' minds and hearts—as well as overcoming resistance and activating persuasion triggers. But there's another even more powerful technique: **audience self-persuasion**.

What is audience self-persuasion? It's a process in which you actively involve listeners in discovering the logic of your argument—in effect, getting *them* to persuade themselves. Persuaders use the following three techniques to transform listeners from passive recipients of a pitch to active participants in a dialogue:

- Visualization
- Questioning
- Active listening

## Visualization

Persuaders help audiences visualize the potential benefits of their proposals.

For example, researchers posing as salespeople went door-to-door "selling" cable-television subscriptions. Some potential customers received a straight pitch stressing cable TV benefits. Others were invited to imagine how cable TV would provide them with broader entertainment.

Results? Among people who received the straight pitch, just 19.5% signed up. Among those who imagined using the service, a whopping 47.4% decided to subscribe to cable TV.

## Questioning

Persuaders also use questions to engage audiences in dialogue about their proposals. In fact, questioning counts among persuaders' most effective tools. Why? Many people enjoy answering questions. Having someone care about what they think makes them feel important. But the urge to answer questions also springs from the fear that others will look down on them if they avoid or can't answer a question.

By asking questions, you control the content, pace, tone, and direction of the persuasion situation. You also determine which issues do—and don't—get discussed.

So what kinds of questions best activate a listener's self-persuasion mechanism? There are several types of questions you can employ:

- **Disturbing questions.** Disturbing questions get at the heart of your listeners' greatest concerns or problems.

For example, suppose you're selling a parcel-tracking software system to a courier firm that's experiencing problems with lost and delayed parcels. In this case, you might ask your potential customer questions such as:

- "How much unproductive time does your staff spend locating lost parcels?"
- "What effect is this problem having on your reputation with your clients?"
- "Could this problem slow down your proposed expansion into new markets?"

These queries increase the magnitude of the lost-parcel problem in the other person's mind.

The questions make the solution you're proposing more attractive, and make the listener more willing to pay a premium to solve his or her problem.

- **Leading questions.** These questions influence how your listeners interpret facts and what they remember. They help plant specific information in your listeners' minds.

For instance, suppose you're conducting a market study in which participants are viewing photos of a new product. You want them to notice and remember a particular feature of the product—a special instant-replay button, for example. If you ask, "How do you like the instant-replay button?" rather than "*Do you see* an instant-replay button?" your participants will be far more likely to remember the button after the study.

- **Rhetorical questions.** When you use rhetorical questions, you give the answer after asking the question. Rhetorical questions help push the listener into accepting a clearly defined proposition. Thus it's best to use them as you're summarizing your presentation or argument.

To illustrate, suppose you're seeking to persuade your direct reports to adopt a new way of processing orders. They've used the existing process for a long time, and some are skeptical about the proposed change. You present your case, and then say something like, "We all know that order-processing errors have increased in the last two quarters. How else will we eliminate them if we don't overhaul the way we process orders?"

## Active listening



As your listeners respond to your questions, you, in turn, must become an active listener to further strengthen your presentation. Active listening means reflecting back and summarizing the content and emotions in your audience's responses to your questions. By reflecting, you show that you've heard and understood the other person—a powerful step in any persuasive effort.

Consider these guidelines:

- **Reflect content.** Paraphrase the factual details you're hearing from your audience, using language such as "It sounds like . . ." "In other words, . . ." "So you're saying . . ." and "It seems that . . ."
- **Reflect emotions.** Acknowledge your listener's feelings.

For instance, if an employee says, "I'm still doing the same old job. I could do it in my sleep," respond with, "Seems like you're feeling bored and frustrated. Is that it?"

- **Summarize.** To redirect a conversation that has wandered off track, sum up what you've heard so far.

For example, "I'm concerned that we've gone off on a tangent. Let me see if I can touch on the main points we've covered."

You can summarize at any point in a persuasion situation. But summarizing is particularly effective when:

- Emotion has begun clouding the issues.
- You feel your views aren't being appreciated or understood.
- You believe it's time to conclude an argument.
- You've reached an agreement and want to ensure that you and the other party share the same understanding about the deal.

By using the techniques of audience self-persuasion, you further enhance the likelihood of moving listeners to your side.

## Key Terms

**Active listening.** Reflecting back and summarizing the content and emotions in your audience's comments and responses. For example, "It sounds like you're bored and frustrated in your job."

**Analogy.** A comparison using the words *like* or *as*; for example, "Business is like war."

**Audience self-persuasion.** A process by which your listeners persuade themselves to accept your idea. You activate audience self-persuasion by asking specific kinds of questions that encourage listeners to imagine for themselves how the change you're proposing could benefit them.

**Benefits.** Ways in which a product or idea will help someone; for instance, a new computer enables users to work faster or store more data.

**Credibility.** A quality that inspires others to believe in you and the ideas you propose. You establish credibility by earning others' trust and demonstrating your expertise with the idea you're proposing.

**Decision makers.** People who have the power to approve or reject your ideas.

**Disturbing questions.** Questions that magnify your listeners' problem in their minds, motivating them to persuade *themselves* of the value of your proposed solution. For example, "What effect is this problem having on your reputation with your clients?"

**Features.** Facts about how a product or service works; for example, "This tape recorder has a high-speed playback button."

**Influencers.** People who provide advice and information to key stakeholders and decision makers and can influence the opinions of those you're trying to persuade.

**Leading questions.** Questions that plant specific information in listeners' minds. For example, "How do you like the easy filing feature in this software?"

**Metaphor.** An imaginative way of describing something as something else; for example, "Business is war." When a metaphor shapes someone's viewpoint, it becomes an **organizing metaphor**.

**Paraphrasing.** Mirroring the ideas and emotions you think you're hearing in someone else's comments; for instance, "So you're annoyed because you think I'm just advancing the party line?" Paraphrasing can help you identify the issues and feelings behind resistance to your proposal.

**Persuasion triggers.** Mental shortcuts that people take to decide whether to accept or reject a proposal when they're pressed for time or lack the energy or inclination to logically weigh the pros and cons of an idea. Psychologists have identified seven persuasion triggers: Contrast, Liking, Reciprocity, Social Proof, Commitment and Consistency, Authority, and Scarcity.

**Persuasion.** A process that enables you to change or reinforce others' attitudes, opinions, or behaviors.

**Receptivity.** An audience's openness to a persuader and his or her ideas.

**Rhetorical questions.** Questions that provide the answer you want your listeners to arrive at. For example, "You see the mess our files are in; how else will we get organized if we don't start using this software?"

**Stakeholders.** People who are going to be affected by a change you're proposing.

**Unique value proposition (UVP).** The essence of your idea; what makes your idea unique and better than alternative or competing proposals, and how it will benefit your intended audience.

## Overview

This section provides interactive exercises so you can practice what you've learned. These exercises are self-checks only; your answers will not be used to evaluate your performance in the topic.

### Scenario

Assume the role of a manager in a fictional situation and explore different outcomes based on your choices (5-10 minutes).

### Check Your Knowledge

Assess your understanding of key points by completing a 10-question quiz (10 minutes).

## Scenario: Part 1

### Part 1

John is a sales manager at a company that uses an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to collect and analyze data from various departments. For example, salespeople enter information about customers, marketing stores consumer-survey results in the database, and the human resources department records employee benefits records. The information technology (IT) department manages the entire system.

John believes that the ERP isn't serving the sales group well. Updating the database with new customer information and generating reports takes too long. Much information is outdated. Accessing the system from the road is difficult.

John wants to try a Web-based customer-relationship management (CRM) service, which lets salespeople update the database in real time—providing flexibility, easier access, and cost savings. The service's technicians manage the system, so there's little downtime.

Using this service would mean major changes in how John's group does business, so he anticipates resistance. At his boss's suggestion, he schedules a meeting in a month's time with the directors of Sales, Marketing, Finance, HR, and IT to explore his idea. To ensure his persuasiveness at the meeting, he knows he must first establish his credibility.

How would you advise John to establish his credibility?

- [Learn about the advantages and disadvantages of Web-based CRM by reading related articles and talking with colleagues at other firms that use such services.](#)

### **Good choice.**

Learning as much as you can about your subject helps you establish your expertise, a key element in building credibility. People see you as having expertise when you exercise sound judgment that proves you're knowledgeable about your ideas. Other strategies for establishing expertise include getting firsthand experience with your subject, asking third-party experts to advocate your position, and mastering the terminology related to your subject. Credibility stems from trustworthiness as well as expertise.

- [Send a memo to all meeting participants outlining the pros and cons of switching to a CRM service.](#)

### **Correct choice.**

Honestly acknowledging potential weaknesses in your proposal helps you establish your trustworthiness, the second building block of credibility, after expertise. When people trust you, they see you as believable, well informed, and sincere. They know that you have their best interests at heart. They also view you as possessing a strong emotional character (steady temperament) and integrity (honesty and reliability). Other strategies for establishing your trustworthiness include showing conviction in the ideas you're proposing, demonstrating your openness to others' perspectives, and following through on promises and commitments that you've made.

- [E-mail meeting participants a list of successful companies who have moved to Web-based CRM services and highlight the benefits of these new systems.](#)

### **Not the best choice.**

In the early stages of preparing for a persuasive presentation, you need to focus more on establishing your credibility than on selling the benefits of your idea. Establishing your credibility early on increases the likelihood that your audience will be receptive to your idea—and its benefits—later. Credibility stems from two sources: trust (people see you as believable, well informed, and sincere) and expertise (people perceive you as exercising sound judgment and as having a history of successes).

## **Scenario: Part 2**



## Part 2

John takes several steps to establish his credibility before the meeting. To build up his expertise, he reads articles about Web-based CRM services and talks with colleagues in other companies that are using such services. To earn others' trust, he sends a memo to all meeting participants outlining the pros and cons of switching to a CRM service.

Next, he identifies the key decision makers in his audience—those individuals who will have a say over whether the company tries a Web-based CRM service. These include the sales, IT, and finance directors. He also identifies the key stakeholders—people who would be most affected by the changes he's proposing. These include the marketing director, who would use many of the reports that a new CRM system would generate, and the HR director, who would use the system to keep track of payroll.

The meeting is two weeks away. John wonders what he should do next.

How would you advise John to proceed?

- Prepare for the group meeting with the expectation that most audience members will be resistant to the idea of switching to a CRM system. Create a list of possible objections that will be raised along with corresponding responses.

**Not the best choice.**

In preparing for a presentation, you need to gauge your audience members' receptivity *separately*. Don't assume that everyone in your audience will have the same perspective on or response to your proposition. Some may be hostile to your idea; others uninformed or uninterested; still others supportive or neutral. Instead, prepare to address varying degrees of receptivity and opposition.

- In advance of the group meeting, determine the decision-making style of the IT director, since she is the person most likely to oppose the idea because her group manages the current system.

**Not the best choice.**

Just as you need to gauge each audience member's receptivity separately before making your presentation, you need to individually assess each person's decision-making preferences. John should gauge the decision-making styles of all participants and plan to address their different needs in his presentation. Some people prefer to make decisions based on lots of data; others analyze respected colleagues' decisions and follow their lead; still others tend to be initially skeptical of any ideas that aren't their own. For each style, you need to adapt your presentation accordingly.

- Before the group meeting, schedule individual meetings with each of the decision makers and key stakeholders to better ascertain



their current thinking on Web-based CRM.

**Correct choice.**

Meeting individually with each of the decision makers and key stakeholders in advance of the group meeting enables you to gauge each person's receptivity to your proposal. Some people might already be supportive; others, hostile; still others, neutral or uninterested. In addition, individual meetings might also help you gain insights into each individual's preferred decision-making style. You can then structure your presentation so as to appeal to each person's degree of receptivity and decision-making preferences.

## Scenario: Part 3

### Part 3

By meeting individually with each of the decision makers and stakeholders, John learns that the strongest opponent of his proposal is the IT director. The sales director seems supportive. The finance, marketing, and HR directors appear neutral.

John prepares his talk with these differences in mind. For the IT director, he makes notes about CRM's potential benefits, arranges for an on-line demonstration, and prepares questions inviting him to imagine how Web-based CRM would improve the way he and his group operate. For the finance, marketing, and HR directors, he prepares vivid stories about problems his sales team has encountered with the current system—to stress the status quo's downside. And to recharge the sales director's enthusiasm, he documents success stories from other companies that use CRM systems.

The meeting day arrives. Most of the participants seem impressed by John's presentation. However, the IT director still appears uneasy. He says, "The idea of an outside vendor having access to our data bothers me. Shouldn't we be concerned about security?" John considers how to respond.

How should John respond?

- "It sounds like you're worried about security risks possibly associated with storing our data in a database that's managed by outsiders. Am I hearing you correctly?"

**Correct choice.**

When you encounter resistance to your idea, it's helpful to use paraphrasing to show that you understand the emotions behind the resister's comments. When people feel that their concerns have been heard, they often become more open to absorbing

additional information that you provide to address their concerns. Also, by paraphrasing accurately and then asking "Am I hearing you correctly?" you receive agreement from the resister. This creates a common bond that further enables the other person to consider your ideas. (For example, after paraphrasing and asking his question, John might next invite the IT director to examine third-party assessments of CRM service providers' data-protection track records.)

- "Let's take a closer look at the data I showed you earlier on the security systems that CRM services have established. I think you'll find the data very convincing."

#### **Not the best choice.**

When you meet with resistance to your idea, don't press your case harder. Instead, paraphrase the resisters' comments to demonstrate that you understand the person's interests and concerns. Then ask whether you're hearing the individual correctly. Also try to understand the emotion behind the person's comments. Often, resistance stems from fear (the person is worried that the change you're proposing will have a negative impact on him or her) or distrust (the individual doesn't trust you or your idea). By understanding the emotion behind the resistance, you can take steps to ease any fears or emphasize your trustworthiness.

- "Perhaps the folks from sales, marketing, and finance could comment on CRM services' data-protection track records, to address your concerns about security."

#### **Not the best choice.**

By deferring to the supportive or neutral members of your audience to address resisters' concerns, you risk reducing your own credibility in the minds of your opponents. Instead, you need to identify the emotions and issues behind resisters' comments. By showing that you've heard and understood your opponents, you make it easier for them to listen to and evaluate additional information you provide about the topic at hand.

## **Scenario: Conclusion**

### **Conclusion**

John's use of paraphrasing and questioning help him overcome resistance from the IT director. By the end of the meeting, the participants agree to a trial period of using a Web-based CRM system. However, they insist on several conditions. For example, they want to continue getting

the same reports they're used to receiving from the current system, and the new system must provide flawless data protection during the trial period.

Successful persuaders employ several strategies while preparing and delivering their message. They lay the groundwork for persuading by establishing their credibility (demonstrating both their expertise and trustworthiness). Before delivering their presentation, they assess each audience member's potential receptivity to their ideas and preferred decision-making style. And if they encounter resistance to their message while delivering their presentation, they take steps to overcome it by understanding the concerns and emotions behind the resistance.

By mastering these persuasion strategies, John successfully changed others' opinions and implemented a new system in his organization.

## Activity: Check Your Knowledge: Question 1

What is persuasion?

- A process by which you change or reinforce other people's attitudes, opinions, or behavior

**Correct choice.**

Successful persuasion—changing others' attitudes, opinions, or behavior—can take place in a single meeting or through a series of meetings or discussions. Persuasion is about making a rational case as well as connecting emotionally with your audience. It's also about positioning an idea, approach, or solution in a way that appeals to or has value for the people who will be affected by it.

- A process by which you quickly close short-term deals that benefit your company

**Not the best choice.**

Persuasion is not about quickly closing short-term deals that benefit only your company. Instead, it's a process by which you change or reinforce other people's attitudes, opinions, or behavior. This process doesn't necessarily take place quickly, in a single meeting. It sometimes happens over time, through a series of meetings or discussions. And it emphasizes positioning an idea, approach, or solution in a way that appeals to or has value for the people who will be affected by it.

- A process by which you enable others to understand and support your organization's interests

**Not the best choice.**

Persuasion isn't about enabling others to understand and support your organization's interests. Instead, it's a process by which you change or reinforce other people's attitudes, opinions, or behavior. Through persuasion, you position an idea, approach, or solution in a way that appeals to or has value for the people who will be affected by it. You do this by making a rational case *and* connecting emotionally with your audience.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 2

What are the two sources of credibility?

- Openness and candor

**Not the best choice.**

Though openness and candor can be valuable personal traits, they are not the two sources of credibility. Credibility comes from trust and expertise. When you earn your audience's trust, your listeners consider your ideas and proposals. They see you as believable, well informed, and sincere, and they know you have their best interests at heart. They also view you as possessing a strong emotional character (steady temperament) and integrity (honesty and reliability). When you establish your expertise, people see that you've exercised sound judgment, that you're knowledgeable about your ideas, and that you've accumulated a history of successes. Together, trust and expertise enable you to build credibility—an important foundation for any persuasion effort.

- Confidence and assertiveness

**Not the best choice.**

Though confidence and assertiveness can be valuable personal traits, they are not the two sources of credibility. Credibility comes from trust and expertise. When you earn your audience's trust, your listeners consider your ideas and proposals. They see you as believable, well informed, and sincere, and they know you have their best interests at heart. They also view you as possessing a strong emotional character (steady temperament) and integrity (honesty and reliability). When you establish your expertise, people see that you've exercised sound judgment, that you're knowledgeable about your ideas, and that you've accumulated a history of successes. Together, trust and expertise enable you to build credibility—an important foundation for any persuasion effort.

- Trust and expertise

**Correct choice.**

When you earn your audience's trust, your listeners consider your ideas and proposals. They see you as believable, well informed, and sincere, and they know you have their best interests at heart. They also view you as possessing a strong emotional character (steady temperament) and integrity (honesty and reliability). When you establish your expertise, people see that you've exercised sound judgment, that you're knowledgeable about your ideas, and that you've accumulated a history of successes. Together, trust and expertise enable you to build credibility—an important foundation for any persuasion effort.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 3

In any persuasion situation, your audience will likely consist of decision makers, key stakeholders, and influencers. Who are key stakeholders?

- People who have the power to approve or reject the change you're proposing

**Not the best choice.**

People who have the power to approve or reject the change you're proposing are decision makers, not key stakeholders. Key stakeholders are the people who stand to be most affected by the change you're proposing. While stakeholders may not have the power to reject your idea, they can put up roadblocks to successful implementation of your idea if you haven't taken their interests and concerns into account. For example, if you're suggesting a new way of processing orders that will mean changes for the way your direct reports work, you'll want them to willingly adopt the new process once your decision makers approve its implementation.

- People who stand to be most affected by the change you're proposing

**Correct choice.**

While stakeholders—the people who stand to be most affected by the proposed change—may not have the power to reject your idea, they can put up roadblocks to successful implementation of your idea if you haven't taken their interests and concerns into account. For example, if you're suggesting a new way of processing orders that will mean changes for the way your direct reports work, you'll want them to willingly adopt the new process once your decision makers approve its implementation.

- People who provide advice and information to key decision makers

**Not the best choice.**

People who provide advice and information to decision makers are influencers, not key stakeholders. Key stakeholders are the people who stand to be most affected by the change you're proposing. While stakeholders may not have the power to reject your idea, they can put up roadblocks to successful implementation of your idea if you haven't taken their interests and concerns into account. For example, if you're suggesting a new way of processing orders that will mean changes for the way your direct reports work, you'll want them to willingly adopt the new process once your decision makers approve its implementation.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 4

To win your audience's mind, you need to communicate the benefits of your proposition. Which of the following is an example of communicating benefits?

- "This new process is based on the leading-edge thinking in the field."

**Not the best choice.**

This is an example of communicating features, not benefits. Though an idea's features (such as what knowledge a new process is based on) may interest your audience, its benefits (how the idea will *help* them) most strongly attract listeners' attention. Persuaders who fail to answer their audience's question, "What's in it for me?" stand little chance of success. Thus the correct answer is, "This new process enables you to save time and acquire more customers."

- "This new process uses a state-of-the-art database and the latest software."

**Not the best choice.**

This is an example of communicating features, not benefits. Though an idea's features (such as what technology a new process uses) may interest your audience, its benefits (how the idea will *help* them) most strongly attract listeners' attention. Persuaders who fail to answer their audience's question, "What's in it for me?" stand little chance of success. Thus the correct answer is, "This new process enables you to save time and acquire more customers."

- "This new process enables you to save time and acquire more customers."

**Correct choice.**

Though an idea's features (such as how a new process works or what knowledge it's based on) may interest your audience, its benefits (how the idea will *help* them) most strongly attract listeners' attention. Persuaders who fail to answer their audience's question, "What's in it for me?" stand little chance of success.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 5

One way to win your audience's heart is to change their organizing metaphor. Which of the following is an example of an organizing metaphor?

- "Management requires many different skills."

**Not the best choice.**

This is a straightforward description of the topic at hand, not an organizing metaphor. The correct answer is "Management is a minefield." An organizing metaphor is an overarching worldview that shapes a person's everyday actions and decisions. People reveal their organizing metaphors through the phrases and word pictures they use while speaking about the issue at hand. For example, a person who uses the metaphor "Management is a minefield" might say things like, "You never know when things are going to explode" or "You have to step gingerly when managing large projects."

To change someone's organizing metaphor, you identify a compelling replacement metaphor (for example, "Management is a playing field"). You then highlight the weaknesses of your audience's current metaphor, and provide examples of people who have achieved success using your replacement metaphor.

- "Management is a minefield."

**Correct choice.**

An organizing metaphor is an overarching worldview that shapes a person's everyday actions and decisions. People reveal their organizing metaphors through the phrases and word pictures they use while speaking about the issue at hand. For example, a person who sees management as a minefield might say things like, "You never know when things are going to explode" or "You have to step gingerly when managing large projects."

To change someone's organizing metaphor, you identify a compelling replacement metaphor (for example, "Management is a playing field"). You then highlight the weaknesses of your audience's current metaphor, and provide examples of people who have achieved success using your replacement metaphor.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 6

In a persuasion situation, what should you do first to overcome resistance to your proposal?

- Understand the interests and emotions behind the resistance

**Correct choice.**

By understanding the interests and emotions behind resistance, you can adapt your responses to win over your opponent. Paraphrasing is one way to uncover the source of resistance. You mirror what you think you're hearing from a resister (for example, "It sounds like you're worried about my proposal's impact on the budget"). If the person agrees that you've heard him correctly, you've created a small bond on which to build further agreement. The person will now be more open to considering new information or responses that you provide to address his concerns.

- Provide more evidence and examples to support your case

**Not the best choice.**

Though you may eventually provide evidence and examples supporting your case, this wouldn't be the first step you would take to overcome resistance to your proposal. Instead, you would seek to understand the interests and emotions behind the resistance. Only then can you adapt your responses to win over your opponent. Paraphrasing is one way to uncover the source of resistance. You mirror what you think you're hearing from a resister (for example, "It sounds like you're worried about my proposal's impact on the budget"). If the person agrees that you've heard him correctly, you've created a small bond on which to build further agreement. The person will now be more open to considering new information or responses that you provide to address his concerns.

- Candidly express your frustration to demonstrate your openness

**Not the best choice.**

Candidly expressing your frustration may only intensify resistance to your proposal. Instead, you need to understand the interests and emotions behind the resistance. Only then can you adapt your responses to win over your opponent. Paraphrasing is one way to uncover the source of resistance. You mirror what you think you're hearing from a resister (for example, "It sounds like you're worried about my proposal's impact on the budget"). If the person agrees that you've heard him correctly, you've created a small bond on which to build further agreement. The person will now be more open to considering new information or responses that you provide to address his concerns.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 7

Psychologists have identified seven persuasion triggers—mental shortcuts your audience might take to decide quickly whether to support your proposal. Which of the following is an example of how to



activate the Liking trigger?

- You do small favors or suggest solutions for your intended audience that you believe will meet their interests and needs as well as serve your own interests.

**Not the best choice.**

Doing favors activates the Reciprocity trigger (whereby people repay favors in kind), not the Liking trigger. To activate the Liking trigger, you create bonds by discovering common interests and you demonstrate *your* liking of others through genuine compliments and expressions of appreciation. Liking is a powerful persuasion trigger. People tend to accept the ideas of individuals they like. Liking, in turn, arises when people feel liked by another person and when they share something in common with him or her.

- You make a connection between yourself, your company, or your product to individuals and organizations that the members of your intended audience admire.

**Not the best choice.**

Making a connection to admired individuals or organizations activates the Social Proof trigger (people follow someone's lead if they see that person as similar to themselves), not the Liking trigger. To activate the Liking trigger, you create bonds by discovering common interests and you demonstrate *your* liking of others through genuine compliments and expressions of appreciation. Liking is a powerful persuasion trigger. People tend to accept the ideas of individuals they like. Liking, in turn, arises when people feel liked by another person and when they share something in common with him or her.

- You discover common interests with your intended audience; express compliments; and make positive statements about your audience's ideas, abilities, and qualities.

**Correct choice.**

Liking is a powerful persuasion trigger. People tend to accept the ideas of individuals they like. Liking, in turn, arises when people feel liked by another person and when they share something in common with him or her. To activate this trigger, you create bonds by discovering common interests, and you demonstrate *your* liking of others through genuine compliments and expressions of appreciation.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 8

Audience self-persuasion counts among the most powerful persuasion techniques available. Which of the following is an example of something you might say to your audience that represents this technique?

- "Everyone knows that loyal customers generate the most profit. We've got to focus on customer acquisition."

**Not the best choice.**

Making a direct statement doesn't activate audience self-persuasion. Instead, you need to use specific types of questions. The correct answer is, "What effect will losing ten clients have on



your annual revenue generation?" This is a disturbing question—one of three types of questions you can use to activate audience self-persuasion. Disturbing questions magnify your listeners' problem in their minds, motivating them to persuade *themselves* of the value of your proposed solution. Leading questions shape what your listeners remember ("How do you like the easy filing feature in this software?"). Rhetorical questions give the answer you want your listeners to arrive at ("You've seen the mess our files are in; how else will we get organized if we don't start using this software?").

- "What effect will losing ten clients have on your annual revenue generation?"

**Correct choice.**

This is a disturbing question—one of three types of questions you can use to activate audience self-persuasion. Disturbing questions magnify your listeners' problem in their minds, motivating them to persuade *themselves* of the value of your proposed solution.

In addition to using disturbing questions to activate audience self-persuasion, you can use leading questions to shape what your listeners remember ("How do you like the easy filing feature in this software?"). You can also use rhetorical questions, which give the answer you want your listeners to arrive at ("You've seen the mess our files are in; how else will we get organized if we don't start using this software?").

- "Would you like me to explain how this new process will solve your problem with customer defections?"

**Not the best choice.**

Asking if your audience wants you to explain the new process requires a yes or no response—so it is not one of the three types of questions you can use to activate audience self-persuasion. The correct answer is, "What effect will losing ten clients have on your annual revenue generation?" This is a disturbing question. Disturbing questions magnify your listeners' problem in their minds, motivating them to persuade *themselves* of the value of your proposed solution.

In addition to using disturbing questions to activate audience self-persuasion, you can use leading questions to shape what your listeners remember ("How do you like the easy filing feature in this software?"). You can also use rhetorical questions, which give the answer you want your listeners to arrive at ("You've seen the mess our files are in; how else will we get organized if we don't start using this software?").

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 9

Which of the following is an example of how to establish your trustworthiness in the minds of your intended audience?

- Demonstrate your conviction and your openness to others' perspectives

**Correct choice.**

Demonstrating your conviction (your belief in what you're proposing) and your openness to others' perspectives is a good way to establish your trustworthiness in the minds of your intended audience. Additional ways to earn trust include following through on promises and

commitments, sharing or giving credit to those who contribute good ideas, putting others' best interests before your own, and candidly admitting your weaknesses or faults. When you *behave* in a trustworthy manner, you earn a reputation for *being* trustworthy.

Combined with establishing your expertise, earning others' trust helps you build your personal credibility.

- [Find out everything you can about the idea you're proposing; for example, by reading related articles](#)

#### **Not the best choice.**

Learning all you can about the idea you're proposing is helpful for establishing your expertise, not your trustworthiness. When combined with trust, expertise helps you build credibility.

To establish your trustworthiness, you can demonstrate your conviction (your belief in what you're proposing) and your openness to others' perspectives. In addition, follow through on promises and commitments, share or give credit to those who contribute good ideas, put others' best interests before your own, and candidly admit your weaknesses or faults. When you *behave* in a trustworthy manner, you earn a reputation for *being* trustworthy.

- [Retain the services of an industry consultant or recognized outside expert to advocate your position](#)

#### **Not the best choice.**

Getting an outside expert to advocate your position is helpful for establishing your expertise, not your trustworthiness. When combined with trust, expertise helps you build credibility.

To establish your trustworthiness, you can demonstrate your conviction (your belief in what you're proposing) and your openness to others' perspectives. In addition, follow through on promises and commitments, share or give credit to those who contribute good ideas, put others' best interests before your own, and candidly admit your weaknesses or faults. When you *behave* in a trustworthy manner, you earn a reputation for *being* trustworthy.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 10

If you've determined that most or all of your audience will be opposed to the idea you plan to propose, how might you best structure your presentation?

- [Help listeners visualize the bright future in store if they adopt your proposal and tell them the actions you want them to take](#)

#### **Not the best choice.**

Helping listeners envision a bright future and telling them which actions to take works best with supportive audiences, not audiences opposed to your proposal.

To win over a hostile audience, you need to present your opponents' position, then refute their case by challenging their evidence and disproving their arguments. By presenting your opponents' position first, you show that you accept the validity of their position—thereby

increasing their receptivity to you. As resisters become more receptive, they find it easier to hear you challenge their evidence and offer new and better solutions. When possible, be sure to incorporate resisters' ideas and suggestions into your proposed solutions.

- Describe a pressing problem that your audience is experiencing, then present a compelling solution to the problem

#### Not the best choice.

Presenting a pressing problem and its solution works best with uninterested or uninformed audiences, not audiences opposed to your proposal.

To win over a hostile audience, you need to present your opponents' position, then refute their case by challenging their evidence and disproving their arguments. By presenting your opponents' position first, you show that you accept the validity of their position—thereby increasing their receptivity to you. As resisters become more receptive, they find it easier to hear you challenge their evidence and offer new and better solutions. When possible, be sure to incorporate resisters' ideas and suggestions into your proposed solutions.

- Present your opponents' position, then refute their case by challenging their evidence and disproving their arguments

#### Correct choice.

By presenting your opponents' position first, you show that you accept the validity of their position—thereby increasing their receptivity to you. As resisters become more receptive, they find it easier to hear you challenge their evidence and offer new and better solutions. When possible, be sure to incorporate resisters' ideas and suggestions into your proposed solutions.

## Check Your Knowledge: Results

# Your score:

## Steps for defining a unique value proposition

### 1. Brainstorm your proposition's benefits.

Think about all the possible benefits of your proposition. Ask yourself what your audience would *gain* and what it would *avoid losing* by accepting your proposition. Research suggests that the fear of loss is a more powerful motivator than the prospect of gain.

### 2. Prioritize the benefits based on your audience's interests.

Review your responses to Step 1. Of the benefits you've identified, which do you think your audience values *most*? Prioritize audience members' interests based on what you know about them—that is, your understanding of their current problems, concerns, and values.

### 3. Gather evidence showing that the high-priority benefits are real.

Collect compelling testimonials from credible sources showing that the benefits that matter most to your audience are within their reach if they accept your proposition. In addition, gather examples, statistics, and graphic representations that speak to the benefits of your proposition.

For instance, suppose you want to persuade your sales team to use a new process for contacting customers. You might cite successful results that seasoned sales teams have obtained by using the new process, and show an example of how one salesperson used the process to acquire new customers. You could also use a chart or other graphic to depict the rise in sales that other companies have achieved by using the process.

#### 4. Decide what makes your proposal unique.

Compare your idea against potential alternative propositions. Ask yourself what's different, unusual, and superior about your idea. Why should your audience accept your proposal and not others'?

Be ready to explain in succinct, compelling terms what makes your proposal better than others.

## Steps for introducing a new organizing metaphor

- **Observe your audience member.**

Meet several times with the person you want to persuade, and talk about your idea or proposal. Jot down the common phrases and images he or she uses when speaking about the subject.

For example, suppose you're a customer service manager and you need to persuade Frank, your direct report, to use a new technology for processing orders. You suspect that Frank is resistant to the idea. While you could mandate that Frank learn the new technology, you know that he'll perform better with it if he truly embraces the idea.

You meet with Frank several times to discuss technology in general. During the conversations, Frank comments, "Those fancy gadgets have no soul," "You can't take the human touch out of business," and "Someday, none of us will have jobs anymore."

- **Translate the person's comments into a one-sentence metaphorical statement.**

Ask yourself what the person's language highlights. What does it emphasize? What does it conceal? How would you capture the comments you recorded in a one-sentence metaphorical statement?

Returning to the example about Frank, you might translate his comments about technology into the following metaphor: "Technology is a heartless machine."

- **Create a new metaphor to act as a frame for the changes you're proposing.**

Think about various metaphors that might help the other person view the topic at hand through a different lens.

For instance, in Frank's case, you might come up with this new metaphor for technology: "Technology is a tool that frees staff up to provide even higher levels of customer service."

- **Work to replace the person's current metaphor with your new one.**

Think about how you might present your new metaphor to the person in a way that helps him or her to adopt it. Your goal is to encourage the other person to make a "mindshift" without consciously realizing it. In short, you want to offer a new way of thinking that has clear advantages over the old way.

How might you get Frank to view technology as a tool rather than a machine? Here are some ideas:

- Share stories about how specific technologies have helped people become even more proficient at their jobs and master new skills that their companies value highly.
- Present Frank with examples of how technologies have helped people solve customers' problems more easily and quickly—something that reinforces the "human touch" that Frank values.
- Use specific language that helps Frank envision technology as a helpful tool that he can control to improve his own and others' lives. For instance, "We're using technology *in the service* of our customers" and "We're *leveraging* technology to *sharpen* our skills and stay on the cutting edge of business."

Changing someone's mind-set isn't easy, so you will probably have to apply these kinds of techniques during multiple occasions to replace Frank's organizing metaphor with your new one.

## Steps for reading your audience quickly

### 1. Scan the surrounding environment.

Browse the audience; look for general patterns in people's appearance and behavior. What is the overall mood of the gathering? What's going on in the background that may be influencing your audience members?

For example, are there many distractions?

### 2. Identify key traits you want to read.

Focus on the person or individuals you want to read. Mentally draw up a list of several key traits you want to observe in those audience members.

For example, do you want to gain a sense of your listeners' energy levels, ability to focus on your message, and openness to new ideas? Do you want to gauge their emotional state and confidence levels?

### 3. Interpret behaviors.

Bring the key traits you identified in Step 2 into sharper focus. Examine the behaviors associated with those traits in minute detail.

For instance, to detect readiness to hear your message, observe whether your audience members are making eye contact with you, showing lively facial expressions, and nodding in agreement. To detect boredom or indifference, watch for blank stares, heads held in the palm of the hand, finger or foot tapping, and doodling. To detect openness, look for unfolded arms, warm smiles, leaning forward, and open palms.

#### 4. Test your assumptions.

Look for ways to test your assumptions about the traits you observed in Step 3.

For example, don't assume too quickly that leaning forward *always* signifies openness. For some individuals, that particular posture may mean they're having trouble hearing you. In this case, you might test your assumptions by asking, "Can everyone hear me okay?" And whereas drooping eyes or limited eye contact may indicate boredom in some people, those same behaviors may reveal fatigue in others—especially if you're presenting your case after lunch or first thing in the morning.

The key is to think about a *range* of possible meanings behind the behaviors you're observing and test your conclusions to ensure that you're reading your audience as accurately as possible.

### Tips for keeping your message simple

- **Use concrete language that is clear and to the point.** As much as possible, avoid abstract, ambiguous, and wordy language. For example, it is more effective to say, "Sales dropped 10% this year" rather than "At certain points in the year, sales numbers were up, then they were down, causing an overall negative impact on forecasted numbers."
- **Avoid technical jargon.** People who use complicated terms as a means to impress others often come across as pretentious. Jargon also has a tendency to confuse audiences. Use simple, commonly understood words instead.
- **Make every word count.** Avoid redundancy; for example, "Our company has been very successful and profitable this year" (profitable is successful) or "The new office building is showy and ostentatious" (ostentatious *means* showy).
- **Draw conclusions.** Don't make your audience members guess your message. Help them arrive at the correct conclusions.

### Tips for speaking with confidence

- **Vary your speaking pace to suit your purpose.** Speaking fast helps you excite and energize your audience, while a slow pace creates a mood of anticipation. For most of your presentation, the best pace would be slow enough for listeners to follow but quick enough to sustain their interest.
- **Use a low pitch to project authority.** Many people interpret a low-pitched voice as authoritative and influential. Likewise, completing a sentence with a downward inflection (a lowering of pitch) communicates confidence and certainty.
- **Control loudness.** Speak loudly enough to be heard but not so loudly as to irritate or offend listeners. To dramatize a moment, try lowering the volume of your voice. Stress important words and phrases with a bit more loudness.
- **Sharpen your articulation.** Clear, crisply articulated words and phrases convey confidence and competence. Such language is also easy to follow.
- **Use pauses for impact.** A correctly timed pause can help you emphasize information and create a desired mood in your audience. It can also alert your audience to pay attention to a special point. The key is to pause just before the point you want to emphasize—for example, "Our sales increased . . . twenty-five percent this year." Count "one, two, three" to yourself while pausing, and maintain eye contact with your listeners during the pause.

### Tips for using body language



- **Face your audience squarely.** Show interest by looking directly at your audience. Stay relaxed, and be expressive. Tilt your head slightly to one side, arch your eyebrows, and nod intermittently to show you understand or agree. Smile to project warmth and confidence and to establish rapport.
- **Assume an open posture.** Convey openness and receptivity by unbuttoning your jacket, sitting forward in your chair, and moving closer to your audience. Ensure that your hands are visible and unclenched. When standing or walking before an audience, adopt an upright stance with relaxed arm movements. Move around any barriers that stand between you and your audience, such as desks or lecterns.
- **Match body language to message.** Ensure that your facial expressions, gestures, and posture match your message. For example, if you are trying to convey openness to others' ideas, avoid crossing your arms and leaning away from your audience.
- **Maintain eye contact.** Communicate interest and empathy by looking your listeners in the eye. Blink normally and adopt an open gaze rather than a narrow-eyed stare.
- **Touch.** In many business and social settings, a handshake is the safest and most positive way to convey friendliness and warmth. Keep your handshake firm and brief. As much as possible, ensure that your hand is dry and warm before shaking hands with others.
- **Relax.** Adopt a comfortable, relaxed, yet attentive pose to let your audience know you're ready to listen. But don't be so relaxed that you slouch—you'll appear bored. And avoid fidgeting and other random movements; they communicate impatience, boredom, and nervousness.

## Tips for using statistics

- **Use credible sources.** Make your statistics credible by citing reputable, authoritative, unbiased sources.
- **Interpret statistics accurately.** For example, many people use "mean," "median," and "mode" to convey "average." But the three words actually signify different things. The mean, for example, should be used to convey the arithmetical average; at a company that has 10 employees and a total payroll of \$1,000,000, the mean, or average, salary is \$100,000 (\$1,000,000 divided by 10). Mode and median have different mathematical meanings and are calculated differently.
- **Round off numbers.** Most people find it much easier to visualize and remember "3 million" than "3,168,758," or "about 30%" than "31.69%."
- **Use comparisons.** Compare one statistic with another to heighten its impact. For example, "The speed of the supersonic jet is 2,000 miles per hour; a snail moves at .005 miles per hour. The jet's velocity is 400,000 times that of the snail."
- **Avoid loaded words.** Most audiences become suspicious when persuaders use "loaded" words—such as "an incredible two-thirds"—to interpret statistics. Use more subtle language to emphasize numbers; for example, "more than two-thirds," "nearly seven out of ten," and "more than two out of three."

## Tips for using visual aids

- **Match the visual aid to your message.** The purpose of using graphics is to communicate information about your proposal, not to dazzle your audience. For example, if you're pitching a no-frills product to a prospective client, use a simple, straightforward graphic instead of a fancy slide show. Or, if you want to involve your audience in seeing a calculation unfold, consider using a flipchart or chalkboard.
- **Convey one idea per visual aid.** If you cram too many concepts onto one slide or diagram, you'll overwhelm your audience.

- **Keep the number of visual aids to a minimum.** Don't present more than one slide or overhead every two minutes. A 20-minute presentation should therefore contain no more than 10 slides.
- **Keep text to a minimum.** Graphic depictions of information are much more memorable than blocks of text or bulleted lists. Keep any text brief and straightforward. Use short, uncomplicated words. Use no more than six lines per visual and six words per line.
- **Check text readability.** Make sure visual aids are readable at a distance and in a darkened room. Avoid using many different typefaces on one graphic.
- **Don't talk to your visual aids.** Look at your audience while explaining a chart, diagram, or graphic.

## Persuasion self-assessment



<i>Persuasion Self-Assessment</i>					
<b>Part I: Assessment</b>					
Use this Tool to assess your persuasion abilities. For each statement below, indicate how accurately the statement describes you. "1" indicates "Not true," "5" indicates "Very true." Be sure to answer based on your actual behavior in real workplace situations. That way, you'll have the most accurate assessment of your skills.					
Statement	Rating				
	Not true				Very true
1. I appropriately establish my qualifications before I try to persuade.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When persuading, I offer proof of how people have been able to trust me in the past.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I analyze listeners' words and behavior to assess their decision-making style and receptivity.	1	2	3	4	5
4. When persuading, I describe the benefits and unique aspects of my idea.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I use metaphors, analogies, and stories in my presentations to highlight my key points.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I consciously limit the number of points I make in my presentations to no more than five.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I support my arguments with highly credible evidence.	1	2	3	4	5
8. When I cite facts, data, or statistics, I package the information for clarity and memorability.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I encourage feedback from my listeners to activate audience self-persuasion.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I use disturbing, leading, and rhetorical questions to encourage audience self-persuasion.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I actively listen to my audience and reflect the content and emotions behind their statements.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I analyze my audience before persuading, to determine my strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I tailor my persuasion strategy, material, and approach for different audiences.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I vary my choice of media according to the message I want to communicate.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I consciously help others in an effort to build trust and credibility, knowing that this could result in a relationship where others want to help me later.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I try to encourage people to make their commitments to my ideas publicly or on paper.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I consciously tap the power that comes from titles or positions of authority that I hold.	1	2	3	4	5
18. When I possess exclusive information, I emphasize its scarcity value to those I'm persuading.	1	2	3	4	5
19. When I promote something, I stress that it's standard practice or part of a popular trend.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I associate myself with products, people, or companies that my audience admires.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I emphasize the similarities I share with people I want to persuade.	1	2	3	4	5
22. When I encounter resistance to my idea, I use paraphrasing and questioning to understand the source of the resistance and to communicate my understanding of the resisters' concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I try to establish positive relationships and feelings with people I want to persuade.	1	2	3	4	5
24. When I anticipate encountering resistance to my ideas, I raise and understand opponents' arguments before presenting my own views.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I use affirmative, assertive speech and win-win language while persuading.	1	2	3	4	5
Score for each column					
Total score					
(Calculate your score by adding up the numbers in all your responses.)					
<b>Part II: Scoring</b>					
Use the following table to interpret your score.					
104-125	<b>Exceptional:</b> You're a talented persuader with a solid understanding of the art and science behind persuasion.				
79-103	<b>Superior:</b> You're a highly effective persuader in many areas but would benefit from refining some of your skills.				
51-77	<b>Adequate:</b> You know and practice many of the basics of persuasion. However, you can increase your success by further extending your skills.				
25-50	<b>Deficient:</b> You'll need to work broadly on your persuasion skills to begin changing or reinforcing others' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.				

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## Worksheet for establishing your credibility

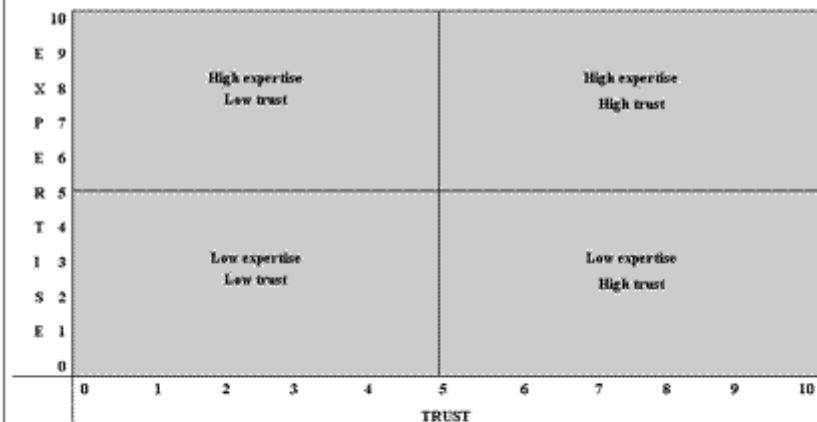
<i>Worksheet for Establishing Your Credibility</i>
Use this Tool to establish or further enhance your credibility before exercising your persuasion skills.
<b>Part I: Your Current Credibility Score</b>

In the table below, list the names of the people you need to persuade to accept a particular proposition or idea. (Add more rows in the table if you need to persuade more people.) In the "Trust Score" column, rate how you think each person perceives your sincerity and trustworthiness. "1" indicates low; "10" indicates high. Do the same for the "Expertise Score" column. In the fourth column, calculate the total Credibility Score by adding together the "Trust" and "Expertise" scores.

Name	Trust Score (1 to 10)	Expertise Score (1 to 10)	Credibility Score Trust + Expertise Scores (1 to 20)
Example: Jane Sullivan	7	2	9

## Part II: The Credibility Matrix

In the matrix below place a dot for each person you listed in Part I, indicating how the person perceives your trust and expertise. For example, if you put a "7" in the "Trust Score" column for Jane, and a "2" in the "Expertise Score" column, you'd put Jane's dot in the lower right-hand quadrant of the matrix.



When you're finished placing a dot for each person in your list, notice where the dots seem to be clustering. Do you tend to have low perceived trust among your intended audience? Low perceived expertise? Low perceptions of both? Move on to Part III to see how you might strengthen any weak areas.

## Part III: Credibility-Building Strategies

If you scored between 0-10 for any of the names in the Credibility Score column, consider the following credibility-building strategies:

Tactics to Build Trust	Tactics to Build Expertise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be reliable. Do what you promise and publicize your fulfilled commitments.</li> <li>Be rational. Base decisions more on reason than emotion.</li> <li>Be receptive. Show that you understand others' needs and concerns.</li> <li>Always deliver more than you promised.</li> <li>Have a trusted and respected colleague actively promote your reliability.</li> <li>Acknowledge your failures and weaknesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicize and distribute third-party testimonials that endorse your position.</li> <li>Persuade a recognized outside expert to publicly validate and endorse your ideas.</li> <li>Write and publish relevant articles.</li> <li>Seek invitations to speak at important meetings and industry or professional forums.</li> <li>Publicly celebrate early successes—even small ones—to prove your ideas' value.</li> <li>Learn to speak with flair, humor, and assertiveness on everyday issues.</li> <li>Hire a coach or attend a course or industry conference to update yourself on cutting-edge thinking in your field.</li> </ul>

In the planner below, list any problems you have with your perceived trust and/or expertise. Then list the actions you need to take to improve those areas.

Trust Issue(s)	Expertise Issue(s)
Actions Required	Actions Required

## Worksheet for understanding your audience

## Worksheet for Understanding Your Audience

Use this Tool to assess an audience that you will need to persuade.

### Part I: Description of Your Proposal and Its Benefits

What is the idea or proposition that you plan to communicate to your audience?

What do you hope to persuade your audience to do based on that idea or proposition?

List the benefits of your idea or proposition.

### Part II: Audience Assessment

- In the first column, list the names of the people who you will need to persuade. These individuals will include the following:
  - Decision makers—individuals who approve or reject your idea
  - Stakeholders—people who are affected by acceptance of your proposal
  - Influencers—people who have access to the stakeholders and decision makers and can sway their opinions
- In the second column, list the benefits that you think each audience member values most.
- In the third column, note how you would gauge each audience member's receptivity to your idea. Which individuals are hostile, supportive, uninterested, uninformed, or neutral?
- In the fourth column, list each audience member's preferred decision-making style. For example, which individuals want a lot of factual information before making a decision? Which ones prefer to analyze other respected individuals' decisions and follow their lead? Which ones tend to feel enthusiastic about new ideas early on but then look for data to support the proposed idea? Which ones, in general, are initially skeptical of others' ideas?

Name	Benefits	Receptivity to Your Idea	Decision-Making Style
Decision Makers			
Stakeholders			
Influencers			

### Part III: Action Planning

- In the first column, copy the names of the individuals just as you listed them in Part II.
- In the second column, note how you plan to win each audience member's mind. That is, what benefits of your idea will you emphasize? What evidence will you provide to reassure your audience that those benefits are within their reach? What words will you use?
- In the third column, note how you plan to win each audience member's heart. That is, what vivid descriptions, metaphors, analogies, and stories might you provide to connect with your listeners on an emotional level?
- In the fourth column, note how you plan to acknowledge resisters' concerns and communicate your understanding of their concerns.

Name	Actions to Win Minds	Actions to Win Hearts	Actions to Deal with Resistance
Decision Makers			
Stakeholders			
Influencers			

### Part IV: Activating Triggers and Audience Self-Persuasion

What persuasion triggers might you set in motion before your presentation? For example, if you think the Reciprocity trigger might increase your persuasiveness, what favors or kindnesses might you do for your audience members that would boost the likelihood that they'll support your idea in return?

How might you activate audience self-persuasion during your presentation? For instance, what disturbing, leading, and rhetorical questions might you pose to encourage listeners to persuade themselves of the value of your idea?

## Why Develop Others?

“At the end of the day, you bet on people, not strategies.”

Larry Bossidy

Former CEO, AlliedSignal

In today's global business environment, markets and regulations change quickly. Competitors constantly innovate. Technological changes are the norm.

In order to outmaneuver the competition and meet the demands of the moment, organizations must be agile. They must execute flawlessly. And they must transform themselves continuously.

Are your leaders ready?

Dr. Noel M. Tichy

Professor

University of Michigan Ross School of Business

We have now entered an era where I don't care what industry you're in, you need leaders who can make decisions, make judgment calls at every single level. All the way down to the interface with the customer.

If you go to a company like Google or any of the high tech companies, a lot of the innovation that Amazon does is happening right at the front line. Go ahead, try it, put it out there, we'll learn from it. That cannot happen if the senior leadership doesn't have a commitment to both develop the leadership capability, but develop the business through engaging people at all levels of the organization.

Becoming a teaching organization

I like to tell parents that they cannot delegate their responsibility to develop their children. And I think it is the same in an organization. Day in and day out the person that has the biggest impact on people in the organization is the next level above and the associates around and below. And so to build a learning organization I say is not enough. Learning could be, you know we are learning cooking, we are learning this or that, but teaching organizations, when I learned something, I have a responsibility to teach my colleagues.

So everybody takes responsibility for generating new knowledge and it is not enough to be a learner, you then have to translate it into teaching.

The Virtuous Teaching Cycle

The role of a leader is to ensure that the people who work for them and around them are better every day. There's only one way to make people better. It's to teach them, learn from them, create what I call "virtuous teaching cycles", not command and control.

A virtuous teaching cycle is teach learn, teach learn. And the leader has a responsibility for reducing the hierarchy, for having a point of view to start the discussion, but then to be responsible to hear everyone's voice, get everyone involved in a disciplined way. It is not a free for all. But it is the leader's responsibility to create that virtuous teaching cycle.

A wonderful example of virtuous teaching cycle is the program that Roger Enrico ran at Pepsi, where every one of the 10 vice presidents comes with a business project.

Roger Enrico gets smarter as result of five days with 10 vice presidents, because he's learning from them. He needs to lower the hierarchy. He needs to be open to learning. And in turn, the people participating need to be energized and empowered to come up and engage in problem solving.

Another example is at Best Buy, where every morning in the stores you would bring 20 associates or so together and they would review the profit and loss statement from the day before, what we learned from the different customer segments in our stores, what we can do to improve our performance this day. And they do that every single day. The store manager was learning mostly from the associates on the floor.

That was a virtuous teaching cycle where everybody is teaching everybody, everybody is learning and the result has been an incredible result at Best Buy.

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

- Harvey S. Firestone

Founder, Firestone Tire and Rubber Co

There are clear advantages to leader-led development.

But for many leaders, taking on teaching, coaching, and other development responsibilities can seem daunting. You might avoid taking on these roles due to lack of time, resources, or your own lack of comfort with this role.

The following tips and resources can help you impart valuable learning to your team every day.

To develop others...

- Start with a Teachable Point of View

The first requirement of being able to develop other leaders is to have what I call a teachable point of view. I often give the example of, if I ran a tennis camp and you just came to day one of the tennis camp, I better have a teachable point of view on how I teach tennis. So you are standing there looking at me and it has got four elements. One, the ideas, well how do I teach the backhand, the forehand, the serve, rules of tennis. Then if I am a good tennis coach, I have a set of values. What are the right behaviors I want, how do I want you to dress, how do I want you to behave on the tennis court.

But if that's all I have, what do I do? Show you a power point presentation and then expect you to hit 500 backhands, 500 serves, run around for eight hours. I have to have a teachable point of view on emotional energy. How do I motivate you to buy in to the ideas and values?

On one end of the spectrum it could be I threaten you with corporal punishment, the other I can give you stock options, I can make you feel good about yourself, I can help you develop as a human being, what motivates you.

And then finally, how do I make the tough judgment calls, the yes/no, decisions as the tennis coach, the ball is in, the ball is out. I don't hire consultants and set up a committee, it is yes/no. And the same with running a business, what are the products, services, distribution channels, customer segments that are going to grow top line growth and profitability of the organization.

What are the values that I want everyone in the organization to have, how do I emotionally energize thousands of people, and then how do I make the yes/no, judgments on people and on

business issues. So the fundamental building block of being able to develop other leaders is to have that teachable point of view just like the tennis coach.

To develop others...

- Lead with questions

Questions are hugely important because you want to create dialogue and again, what I call a virtuous teaching cycle where the teacher learns from the students and vice versa. Which means everybody ought to be free to ask whatever is on their mind, whatever it will take to get clarity and understanding, but it is not the leader just coming in and freeform asking questions. I believe the leader has a responsibility for framing the discussion, for having as best they can a teachable point of view, they may need help from their people in flushing it out, but they need to set the stage but then it has to be a very interactive, what I call virtuous teaching cycle environment, teach learn, teach learn, teach learn.

To develop others...

- Make it part of your routine

A good example to me of an outstanding leader developing other leaders is Myrtle Potter who at the time I am commenting was Chief Operating Officer of Genentech running the commercial side of the business. And she would take time at the end of every single meeting and do some coaching of the whole team on how we could perform as a team better, and then she would often take individuals and say, could we spend 10 minutes over a cup of coffee, I want to give you some feedback and coaching on that report that you just presented on or how you are handling a particularly difficult human resource issue, but it was part of her regular routine. And I think the challenge for all of us as leaders is to make that a way of life and it is built into the fabric of how we lead and it is not a one off event, three times a year. It is happening almost every day.

To develop others...

- Make it a priority

One of the biggest challenges in getting people kind of on this path is to overcome some of their own resistance, either fear or the way I view the world I don't have time for this, everybody can make time. Roger Enrico is CEO of Pepsi. He didn't have time to go off for a week at a time and run training sessions. He had to readjust his calendar. So it requires you to look in the mirror and say, is this important. If it is important, of course I can make the time. Then I have to get over my own anxiety on how well I can do it, but it is a commitment to get on the path that says: this is how I am going to drive my own performance and the performance of my colleagues.

To develop others...

- Learn to teach

I think the biggest mistake is to assume you are going to be good at it right off the bat. It is like learning anything else. First time you go out and try and play tennis, good luck. But you got to stay with it and you got to engage your people in helping make you better and them better. And so it is a journey you need to get on, not I am going to do it perfectly when I start out.

If you want to be a great leader who is a great teacher, it's very simple. You have got to dive into the deep end of the pool. But you've got to dive into the pool with preparation. I don't want you drowning. I want you succeeding. It is extraordinarily rewarding for most human beings to teach others. I think once you can turn that switch on, it is self perpetuating. You get a lot of reinforcement, your team is better. You perform better because your performance goes up and it becomes this virtuous teaching cycle.

## Your opportunity to develop others

We've heard why developing others can drive greater business results, and how to make the most of your leader-led development efforts. The materials provided in Develop Others enable you to create personalized learning experiences for YOUR team within the flow of their daily activities. Use the guides and projects to engage your team quickly. And to explore how key concepts apply to them in the context of their priorities and goals.

The value of teaching is the performance of the organization is totally dependent on making your people smarter and more aligned every day as the world changes. In the 21st century we are not going to get by with command and control. We are going to have to get by with knowledge creation. The way you create knowledge in an organization is you create these virtuous teaching cycles where you are teaching and learning simultaneously, responding to customer demands and changes, responding to changes in the global environment. My bottom line is if you're not teaching, you're not leading.

A leader's most important role in any organization is making good judgments — well informed, wise decisions about people, strategy and crises that produce the desired outcomes. When a leader shows consistently good judgment, little else matters. When he or she shows poor judgment nothing else matters. In addition to making their own good judgment calls, good leaders develop good judgment among their team members.

**Dr. Noel M. Tichy**

**Professor, University of Michigan Ross School of Business**

Dr. Noel M. Tichy is Professor of Management and Organizations, and Director of the Global Business Partnership at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The Global Business Partnership links companies and students around the world to develop and engage business leaders to incorporate global citizenship activities, both environmental projects and human capital development, for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Previously, Noel was head of General Electric's Leadership Center at Crotonville, where he led the transformation to action learning at GE. Between 1985 and 1987, he was Manager of Management Education for GE where he directed its worldwide development efforts at Crotonville. He currently consults widely in both the private and public sectors. He is a senior partner in Action Learning Associates. Noel is author of numerous books and articles, including:

For more information about Noel Tichy, visit <http://www.noeltichy.com>.

## Share an Idea

Leaders are in a unique position to recognize the ideas and tools that are most relevant and useful for their teams. If you only have a few minutes, consider sharing an idea or tool from this topic with your team or peers that is relevant and timely to their situation.

For example, consider sending one of the three recommended ideas or tools below to your team with your comments or questions on how the idea or tool can be of value to your organization. By simply



sharing the item, you can easily engage others in important conversations and activities relevant to your goals and priorities.

[Persuasion self-assessment](#)  
[Steps for reading your audience quickly](#)  
[Tips for using visual aids](#)

To share an idea, tip, step, or tool with your comments via e-mail, select the EMAIL link in the upper right corner of the page that contains the idea, tip, step, or tool that you wish to share.

## Discussion 1: Winning minds and hearts

You want your team members to generate valuable ideas that can benefit your organization. But ideas don't generate benefits unless they're embraced by decision makers who approve and support their implementation. To gain their support, your team members must know how to present their ideas in ways that appeal both to decision makers' logic and emotions. Winning audiences' "minds" and "hearts" requires two different sets of skills that can seem daunting to team members.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to strengthen their ability to appeal to decision-makers' logic and emotions.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Winning Minds and Hearts](#)  
[Discussion Guide: Winning Minds and Hearts](#)  
[Discussion Slides: Winning Minds and Hearts \(optional\)](#)  
[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Discussion 2: Overcoming resistance to your idea

When your team members present an idea or proposal to decision makers, they may encounter resistance from some decision-makers. This can happen even if your people have a great idea and they've taken careful steps to win their audience's minds and hearts. If your team members don't address that resistance, they could fail to win the support needed to put their great idea into action. And your organization will miss out on the benefits promised by the idea.

Fortunately, there are a number of things your team can do to move resisters around to their point of view. These include understanding resisters' interests and emotions, listening to their concerns, and acknowledging their viewpoints before presenting their own.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about techniques for overcoming resistance.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Overcoming Resistance to Your Idea](#)  
[Discussion Guide: Overcoming Resistance to Your Idea](#)  
[Discussion Slides: Overcoming Resistance to Your Idea \(optional\)](#)  
[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Start a Group Project

Just like any change effort, successfully incorporating new skills and behaviors into one's daily activities and habits takes time and effort. After reviewing or discussing the concepts in this topic, your direct reports will still need your support to fully apply new concepts and skills. They will need to overcome a variety of barriers including a lack of time, lack of confidence, and a fear of making mistakes. They will also need opportunities to hone their skills and break old habits. To help ensure their success, you can provide safe opportunities for individuals and your team as a whole to practice and experiment with new skills and behaviors on the job.

For example, to encourage the adoption of new norms, you can provide your team members with coaching, feedback, and additional time to complete tasks that require the use of new skills. Management approaches such as these will encourage team members to experiment with new skills until they become proficient.

Group learning projects provide another valuable technique for accelerating team members' development of new behaviors. A group learning project is an on-the-job activity aimed at providing team members with direct experience implementing their new knowledge and skills. Through a learning project, team members discover how new concepts work in the context of their situation, while simultaneously having a direct and tangible impact on the organization.

The documents below provide steps, tips, and a template for initiating a group learning project with your team, along with two project recommendations for this topic.

Download resources:

[Tips for Initiating and Supporting a Learning Project](#)

[Learning Project Plan Template](#)

[Learning Project: Strengthen Your Credibility](#)

[Learning Project: Craft a Persuasion Strategy for a Key Audience](#)

## Take a Strategic Approach to Persuasion

[Christina Bielaszka-DuVernay. "Take a Strategic Approach to Persuasion." \*Harvard Management Update\*, July 2008.](#)

[Download file](#)

### Summary

Got a great idea? Whether it's a new vision for your marketing team or a better way to handle shipping delays, your idea is only as good as your ability to get others to buy into it and execute it. Effective persuasion, say Mario Moussa and G. Richard Shell, authors of "The Art of Woo: Using Strategic Persuasion to Sell Your Ideas", is about "pull," not "push." Instead of concentrating on the value you see in your idea, you need to frame it in terms of how it will meet the other party's interests and needs. This article, which focuses on two of the four steps Moussa and Shell have developed to help

executives and managers handle complex negotiations and win buy-in on new ideas, explains how you can turn potential barriers—the other side's beliefs, values, and interests; your own level of credibility—into bridges that connect you with others and, ultimately, bring them over to your side.

## Three Ways to Be More Persuasive

Judith A. Ross. "Three Ways to Be More Persuasive." *Harvard Management Update*, December 2008.

[Download file](#)

### Summary

Moving projects forward in today's flatter organizations, where cross-functionality is the norm, requires the ability to manage up, down, and sideways. That's where persuasion comes in, says Robert Cialdini, social psychologist and a coauthor of "Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive". Much as martial arts experts overcome their opponents using leverage and gravity rather than brute strength, you can persuade others using the principles of social influence. We've all heard the old saying, "One good turn deserves another." In doing that good turn for a coworker, you activate reciprocity; your coworker will now be looking for a favor she can do for you in return. Another principle of social influence is that people are more open and generous with people they know like them. So look for something you genuinely like about a person—then compliment him on it. He'll be much more likely to give you the information you need or to support your ideas. Persuasion is ultimately about relationships. The more you have and the stronger they are, the better your chances of winning others to your side when you need them.

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